

THE

Pam 58

VILLAGE CURATE,

A

P O E M.

Dum relego scripsisse pudet, quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque qui feci iudice, digna lini.

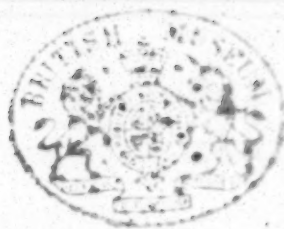
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T H E

VILLAGE CURATE.

OF Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden—of the glorious year,
In all her changes fair ; of gentle Spring,
Veil'd in a show'r of roses and perfumes,
Refulgent Summer in the pride of youth,
Mild Autumn with her wain and wheaten sheaf,
Or fullen Winter, loud, and tyrannous,
Let nobler poets sing. Sit thou apart,
And on thine own Parnassus sweep the lyre,
Applauded Hayley, by the Muses taught
That in those fairy groves delight to dwell
Thy hand has rear'd. And thou, surpassing bard,
That pris'ner to some fair one's will hast sung

Thy Task so sweetly, strike again the strong,
 The bold, the various energetic chord,
 Secure and happy in thy far retreat.
 Be mine the task to sing the man how blest,
 The Village Curate. From no foreign shore
 Came he a wand'ring fugitive, and tost
 On angry seas, to please a poet's gods,
 At length scarce reach'd the hospitable port.
 With Father Brute he boasts not to have left
 The tottering state of Priam, nor his blood
 Can shew by lineal catalogue so pure
 And only British, that no rude invader
 Of Danish, Saxon, or of Norman breed,
 Has mix'd with his god-sprung progenitors.
 He has not clomb the high and hoary tops
 Of Snowdon or Plinlimmon, yet in heart
 A truer Briton lives not; thee he loves,
 O happy England, and will love thee still.

In yonder mansion, rear'd by rustic hands,
 And deck'd with no superfluous ornament,
 Where use was all the architect propos'd,
 And all the master wish'd, that scarce a mile
 From village tumult, to the morning sun
 Turns his warm aspect, yet with blossoms hung
 Of cherry, and of peach, lives happy still
 The reverend Alcanor. On a hill,
 Half way between the summit and a brook

That

That idly wanders at the foot, it stands,
And looks into a valley wood-besprent,
That winds along below. Beyond the brook,
Where the high coppice intercepts it not,
Or social elms, or with his ample waist
The venerable oak, up the steep side
Of yon aspiring hill full opposite,
Luxuriant pasture spreads before his eye
Eternal verdure ; save that here and there
A spot of deeper green shews where the swain
Expects a nobler harvest, or high poles
Mark the retreat of the scarce-budded hop,
To be hereafter eminently fair,
And hide the naked staff that train'd him up
With golden flow'rs. On the hill-top behold
The village steeple, rising from the midst
Of many a rustic edifice ; 'tis all
The pastor's care. For he, ye whipping clerks,
Who with a jockey's speed from morn till night
Gallop amain through sermons, services,
And dirty roads, and hardly find the day
Sufficient for your toil—he still disdains
For lucre-sake to do his work amiss,
And starve the flock he undertakes to feed.

Nor does he envy your ignoble ease,
Ye pamper'd Priests, that only eat and sleep,
And sleep and eat, and quaff the tawny juice

Of

Of vet'ran port : sleep on, and take your rest,
Nor quit the downy couch preferment strews
To aid your master. While Alcanor lives,
Though Providence no greater meed design
To crown his labour, than the scanty sum
One cure affords, yet will he not regret
That he renounc'd a life so profitless
To God and to his country. For he too
Might still have slumber'd in an easy chair,
Or idly loll'd upon a sofa, held
A willing captive in the magic chain
Of Alma-mater, but in happy time
Serious occasion cut the golden link,
And set him free, to taste the nobler sweets
Of life domestic. 'There th' apostate lives,
In habitation neat, but plain and small.
Look in and see, for there no treason lurks,
And he who lives as in the face of Heav'n
Shuns not the eye of man. On either side
The door that opens with a touch, a room,
The kitchen one, and what you will the other.
There now he sits in meditation lost,
And to the growing page commits with speed
'To-morrow's text. Look round, nor fear to rouse
The busy soul, that on her work intent,
Holds sense a pris'ner, and with cautious bolt
Has barr'd full-fast the portals of the mind,
'To shut out interruption. Bare the walls—

For

For here no painter's happy art has taught
The great progenitor to live anew
Upon the smiling canvass. Sculpture here
No ornament has hung of fruit or flow'r.
Nor specimen is here, to shew how well
The imitative style can steal the grace
That Nature lent the Painter. One poor sheet,
Half almanack, half print, without a frame,
Above the grate hangs unaccompanied :
A kind remembrancer of time to come,
Of fast and festival, expiring terms,
New moon and full. A regal table here
Arrests the eye, and here the vast account
Of Chancellor, High Steward, and their train,
Vice-chancellor, and Proctors, awful sound,
And still more awful sight to him that treads
The public street with hat and stick, or wants
That grave appendage of the chin, a band.
Above behold the venerable pile
Some pious Founder rais'd ; but stay we not
To call him from his grave, where he perhaps
Would gladly rest unknown, and have an ear
Not to be rous'd by the Archangel's trump.

Yon half-a-dozen shelves support, vast weight !
The Curate's Library. There marshall'd stand,
Sages and heroes, modern and antique :
He their commander, like the vanquish'd fiend,
Out-cast

Out-cast of Heav'n, oft thro' their armed files
Darts an experienc'd eye, and feels his heart
Distend with pride to be their only chief.
Yet needs he not the tedious muster-roll,
The title-page of each well-known, his name,
And character. Nor scorns he to converse
With raw recruit or musty veteran,
And oft prefers the mutilated garb
To macaroni suit, bedaub'd with gold,
That often hides the man of little worth,
And tinsel properties. What need of dress
So fine and gorgeous, if the soul within
Be chaste and pure? The fairest mask put on
Hides not the wrinkle of deformity.
A soul of worth will gild a beggar's frieze,
And on his tatter'd suit a lustre shed
No time can change. Give to the harlot's cheek
The glowing rouge, true virtue needs it not.
Shed perfumes in the chambers of the sick,
The lip of health has odours of its own.

Now mark we, what the master most esteems,
Yon antiquated thing, whose shapeless bulk
Fills half his room, the name a harpsichord.
In days remote the artist liv'd, whose hand
First smoothen'd the burnish'd surface, haply sprung
From line of Jubal, whose ingenious race
First taught the harp and organ. Thence it came,
Like great Atrides' sceptre, handed down

From

From Vulcan's smithy : to his chatterbox
The pert and nimble-finger'd Argicide
Jove gave it, he to Pelops, and so on.
So when his Grace a thread-bare coat discards,
He gives it to his valet, he to Tom,
And Tom to Dick ; then fwings it for a while
Under a penthouse-shade in Monmouth-street.
It travels once again from back to back,
Of prentice, poet, pedlar, till at length,
Quite out at elbows, and of buttons stript,
Powder'd and greasy, to some beggar's brat
It falls, a golden prize. Such the descent
Alcanor's instrument may boast, but he
More for its present use the thing esteems,
Than could its ancient pedigree be trac'd
E'en to the days of old Cadwallader.

What boots it, O ye titled great, to shew
The noble ancestor of regal line,
Whose valour bound an enemy in chains,
Or patriotic wisdom sav'd a state ;
To be allied to men of wit and worth,
The glory of the world, if in yourselves
No spark of virtue live ? Who can esteem
The man that all his dignity derives
From honours not his own ? Give me the steed
Whose noble efforts bore the prize away,
I care not for his grandfire or his dam ;
Be thine the nag of admirable port,

That

That spare and sinewless still lags behind,
I ask him not, though sprung of Galathy,
Bucephalus, or Pegase. Yet I grant,
Where goodness is to greatness near allied,
And blood and virtue for one empire strive,
The man that has them is a man indeed.
Nor, trust me, is the world so worthless grown,
But such there are, and such my soul esteems.

That ample case, that underneath the frame
Of harpsichord so smooth, in shape uncouth
Reposes, from the morning broom defends
A viol-bass, else long ago destroy'd
By the rude blows of flattern Dorothy.
For she, a subtle wit, can plainly see
No worth in that whose worth is far remov'd
Beyond her sight, and reach : so, critic-like,
She sweeps away her cobweb with a frisk,
And crushes many a pearl. That smaller case
A violin protects, still safe and sound,
Though tumbled oft upon the parlour floor
With proud disdain, and ruin musical.
Six ashen chairs, a table, and a grate,
Poker and tongs, make up the vast account.

Such is Alcanor's household, such his state,
Save what might yet be sung in higher strains,
Of pan and kettle, barrel, broom, and stool,

The

The furniture of wash-house, kitchen vast,
 And cellar ill-bestow'd ; imperial themes,
 And worthy meditation infinite.
 Save too the tedious invent'ry above,
 Of bed and blanket, old bureau, and chair.
 Besides what ornaments the skyey nest
 Of high-aspiring Dorothy. A maid
 Is she, that sleeps in the moon's neighbourhood,
 And often hears the golden shew'r descend
 Upon the tiles above, nor dreads assault
 From maid-deceiving Jove. Too wise were he
 To seek Calisto under Dian's nose.
 Let the fair silver-shafted Queen depart,
 And Jove may come to woo her in the dark ;
 She too has beauty that demands a veil,
 O hide her from him or she wins him not.

Reader, methinks displeasure clouds thy brow,
 And Scorn prepares her poison'd arrows, perch'd
 On that protruded lip. ' Is this the man,
 ' The Poet sings, that stranger to the world
 ' Suffers the speedy wick of life to burn
 ' E'en to the socket, and the duty done
 ' One church affords, the rest of life gives up
 ' To selfish ease ? Are these the nobler sweets
 ' Of life domestic ? Was it but for this
 ' Alcanor fled the public walks of life,
 ' And blest the serious cause that set him free

' From

' From Alma-mater's chain ? Nobler it were
 ' To mingle with the busy world, and be
 ' As others are, than sit at home supine
 ' And sedulous to please himself alone.
 ' I grant him innocent and free from blame,
 ' Yet curse the bliss that centres in itself.
 ' Give me the man who cannot taste a joy
 ' That none partakes.'--A truce, my gentle friend,
 For such Alcanor is. Not for himself
 He sought the lonely cell remote, and stor'd
 His humble mansion with resources sweet
 Of intellectual bliss. To other eyes
 And other ears the letter'd page unfolds
 Ambrosial food, the honey of research.
 'Tis not to please Alcanor's self alone,
 Or frantic Dorothy, so oft is heard
 The melting sound of sweet-ton'd harmony.
 In chambers yet unfung three Fairies dwell,
 Each to Alcanor bound, and near in blood,
 But nearer in affection. Julia she,
 Who holds the rein of household management,
 And moderates with skill the lavish hand
 Of hasty Dorothy. Eliza next,
 Of aspect mild and ever-blooming cheek ;
 Good humour there, and innocence, and health
 Perennial roses shed. It is a May
 That never quits her blush, but still the same
 Is seen in Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring ;

Save

Save when it glows with a superior red,
Kiss'd by the morning breeze, or lighted up
At sound of commendation well-bestow'd
Under the down-cast eye of modest worth,
That shrinks at its own praise. Yet thoughtless belles,
That day by day the fashionable round
Of dissipation tread, stealing from art
The blush Eliza owns, to hide a cheek
Pale and deserted, come, and learn of me
How to be ever blooming, young, and fair.
Give to the mind improvement. Let the tongue
Be subject to the heart and head. Withdraw
From city smoke, and trip with agile foot,
Oft as the day begins, the steepy down
Or velvet lawn, earning the bread you eat.
Rise with the lark, and with the lark to bed.
The breath of night's destructive to the hue
Of ev'ry flow'r that blows. Go to the field,
And ask the humble daisy why it sleeps
Soon as the sun departs? Why close the eyes
Of blossoms infinite, ere the still moon
Her oriental veil put off? Think why,
Nor let the sweetest blossom be expos'd
That nature boasts, to night's unkindly damp.
Well may it droop, and all its freshness lose,
Compell'd to taste the rank and pois'nous steam
Of midnight theatre, and morning ball.
Give to repose the solemn hour she claims,

And

And from the forehead of the morning steal
 The sweet occasion. O there is a charm
 The morning has, that gives the brow of age
 A smack of youth, and makes the lip of youth
 Shed perfumes exquisite. Expect it not
 Ye who till noon upon a down-bed lie,
 Indulging fev'rous sleep, or wakeful dream
 Of happiness no mortal heart has felt
 But in the regions of romance. Ye fair,
 Like you it must be woo'd, or never won.
 And being lost, it is in vain ye ask
 For milk of roses and Olympian dew.
 Cosmetic art no tincture can afford
 The faded feature to restore : No chain,
 Be it of gold, and strong as adamant,
 Can fetter beauty to the fair one's will.

But leave me not the gentle Isabel
 Unfung, though nature on her cheek no rose
 Has planted, and the lily blossom there
 Without a rival—Look within, and learn
 That nature often on the mind bestows
 What she denies the face.—O, she is kind,
 And gives to ev'ry man his proper gift,
 To make him needful in the land he lives.
 There is not inequality so strange
 Twixt man and man, as haughty wits suppose.
 The beggar treads upon the monarch's heel

For

For excellence, and often wears a heart
Of noble temper, under filth and rags :
While he that reigns, in spite of outward pomp,
Is mean and beggarly within, and far outweigh'd
By the offensive lazar at his gate.

Th' unletter'd fool that daily steers the plough,
With vacant head, and heart as unimprov'd
As the dull brute he drives, gives to the world
A necessary good, which all thy pains,
Ingenious Critic, or thy deep research,
Profound Philosopher, thy preaching, Clerk,
Thy prattle, Lawyer, or thy grave demurs,
Costly Physician, hardly shall exceed.

The kingly tulip captivates the eye,
But smelt we loath, while the sweet violet,
That little beauty boasts, hid from the sight,
With such a fragrant perfume hits the sense
As makes us love ere we behold. And so
The gaudy peacock of the feather'd race
The noblest seems, till the sweet note be heard
That nightly cheers the musing poet's ear
Under the thorny brake ; and then we grant,
That little Philomel, so unadorn'd,
Needs not the aid of plumes. So, Isabel,
Internal worth upon thy cheek bestows
A rose's beauty, tho' no rose be there.
A heart that almost breaks to be rebuk'd,
A mind inform'd, yet fearful to be seen,

Kept

Kept by a tongue that never but at home,
And cautious then, its golden trust betrays—
These are thy charms, and they are charms for me,
And in my eye as sweet a grace bestow,
As matchless beauty, trick'd in airy smiles
And suit of fantasy, what time she trips
With foot inaudible the sprightly round
Of fairy dance, outshining ev'ry star,
And planet of the night. And these shall last,
As morning fair and fresh as amaranth,
When all thy triumphs, Beauty, are no more.

Here let us pause. For learned jockeys say,
'Tis good to give one's steed a morning draught.
And he that will may whet his whistle too
With dram of gin or cordial peppermint,
The journey scarce begun. Tedious the way,
Thro' many a dismal lane, and darksome wood,
In story famous for the murder done
On nightly traveller. And ask the sot
Who daily drives the clattering stage, with face
Red as a butcher's beef, and coat of proof,
Lashing his raw-bon'd steeds to be in time,
Now swearing, drinking now, now cutting jokes,
Now laughing loud, and now with surly heel
Stamping the boot—ask him, I say, if drink
Be not the soul of labour. What could he,
The frequent pot denied, the smiling bowl,

Or

And ever and again returning dram ?
Or ask the drunken fool, that all day long
Or drinks, or lolls upon an alehouse bench,
With pot in hand, and thirsty pipe in mouth.
Sons of Anacreon, say whence the laugh
That shakes the very roof, at ev'ry pause
Of the loud song with Stentrophonic voice
Bray'd forth ? Or you, ye gallant bucks and bloods,
Say whence your noble exploits, to beset
Fair Thais, kick the waiter, break the lamps,
Cry fire, and bid defiance to the watch ?
Join your shrill pipes, ye maids of Billingsgate,
And market dames, and make the chorus full.
' O, there is nothing noble to be done
' Till we have swallow'd pint on pint. 'Tis drink,
' And only drink, that makes the world go round.'

I praise you not ; and if there be a man
Who thus far has perus'd my careless page,
In hopes to find a palliative to vice,
Here let us part.—An enemy to mirth
Who deems me, does me wrong. I hold it good
To laugh away a portion of my days,
And give to mirth her song, to sport her feather.
But he that draws his wit to stab at truth,
And is the friend of folly when he smiles,
Has liv'd too long. O let me never be
Virtue's assassin, or the shield of vice.

Kind

Kind Heaven, if there be an hour so black
Yet lodg'd in future time ; O cut me off
Ere it arrive, and send me to my grave
E'en in the pride and glory of my strength.

YE gentle Pow'rs (if any such there be,
And if there be not ; 'tis a sweet mistake
To think there be) that day by day, unseen,
Where souls unanimous, and link'd in love,
In sober converse spend the vacant hour,
Hover above, and in the cup of life
A cordial pour that all its bitter drowns,
And gives the hasty minutes as they pass
Unwonted fragrance ; come and aid my song.
In that clear fountain of eternal love
That flows for ay at the right of him,
The great Incomprehensible ye serve,
Dip my advent'rous pen, that nothing vile,
Of the chaste eye or ear unworthy, may
In this my early song be seen or heard.

Proceed

Proceed we then to mark the Curate's steps,
His mode of living, manners, and pursuits,
As down the steep declivity of life
He glides, and hastens to the hungry grave.
One year the limits of our song confine,
From early spring till spring return again.

Then let the muse begin, when Winter yet
Powers the lawn with snow, and on our eaves
Hangs the chaste icicle. Be that the time,
When the tir'd sportsman lays his gun aside,
Nor wages ineffectual war again
On partridge race. The day St. Valentine,
When maids are brisk, and at the break of day
Start up, and turn their pillows, all agog
To know what happy swain the fates provide
A mate for life. Then follows vast discharge
Of true-love knots and sonnets nicely penn'd,
But to the learned critic's eye no verse,
But prose distracted, galloping away
Like yelping cur with kettle at his tail.
Forgive the thought, ye maids of poesy,
And be as kind as fair. A man may laugh
And yet approve, and I your pains applaud,
Tho' short of excellence. I love the maid
That has ambition, and betrays a mind
Of active and ingenious turn; that scorns
Only to be what Fashion and the age

Require,

Require, and can do more than flirt her fan,
Read novels, dance with grace, sing playhouse airs,
Talk scandal, daub or vellum, or her face,
Retain some half-a-dozen terms in French,
And half as many English, and dispatch
By ev'ry post a tedious manuscript,
Which to translate would crack the very brain
Of Arabic Professor. O ye fair,
Ye were design'd for nobler flights than these.
Nature on you as well as us bestow'd
The good capacity. And though to us
She gave the nicer judgment, yet she hid
The sweet defect in you, with better skill
To clothe the fair idea, keener eye,
And quicker apprehension. 'Tis in you
Imagination glows in all her strength,
Gay as the robe of spring, and we delight
To see you pluck her blossoms, and compose
The cheerful nosegay for the swain you love.
What if Alcanor's self should not disdain
To imitate your heart, but sometimes hang
Ill-woven chaplets on Maria's brow,
That needs no ornament to set it off
With better grace. The hour so spent shall live,
Not unapplauded, in the book of heav'n.
For dear and precious as the moments are,
Permitted man, they are not all for deeds
Of active virtue. Give we none to vice,

And

And Heav'n will not strict reparation ask
For many a summer's day and winter's eve
So spent as best amuses us. Alas !
If he that made us were extreme to mark
The trifled hour, what human soul could live ?
We trifle all, and he that best deserves
Is but a trifler. What art thou whose eye
Follows my pen, or what am I that write ?
Both triflers. 'Tis a trifling world, from him
That banquets daintily in sleeves of lawn,
To him that starves upon a country cure :
From him that is the pilot of a state,
To him that begs, and rather begs than works.

Then blame we not Alcanor for his pains,
Nor think him misemploy'd, what time he sits
Eager to clothe the new-born thought, and woos
The maiden Meditation, hard to win,
For terms of apt significance. Nor then,
When winter better pleas'd puts on a smile,
And round his garden at high noon he walks,
Not unattended, and the daffodil
And early snowdrop welcomes, pensive flow'r.
Nor needs he then excuse, what time he starts,
To mark the progress of the morning sun,
As northward from his equinox he steers
And once again brings on the glorious year.
Sweet are the graces that the steps attend

Of

Of early morning, when, the clouded brow
 Of winter smooth'd, up from her orient couch
 She springs, and like a maid betroth'd, puts on
 Her bridal suit, and with an ardent smile
 Comes forth to greet her swain. And to my eye,
 As well as thine, Alcanor, grateful 'tis,
 Ay, passing sweet, to mark the cautious pace
 Of slow-returning Spring, e'en from the time
 When first the matted apricot unfolds
 His tender bloom, till the full orchard glows ;
 From when the gooseberry first shews a leaf,
 Till the high wood is clad, and the broad oak
 Gives to the fly-stung ox a shade at noon
 Sun proof. How charming 'tis, to see sweet May
 Laugh in the rear of winter, and put on
 Her gay apparel to begin anew
 The wanton year. See where she comes again
 As fair, as young, as brisk, as when from heav'n
 Before the author of the world she trip'd
 To Paradise rejoicing : the light breeze
 Wafts to the sense a thousand odours ; Hark !
 The cheerful music that attends.

O Man,

Would on thyself alone the awful doom
 Of death had past. It grieves me to the soul
 To think how soon the blooming year shall fade,
 How soon the leafy honours of the vale

Be

Be shed, the blossom nipt, and the bare branch
Howl dreary music in the ear of winter.
Yet let us live, and while we may, rejoice,
And not our present joy disturb, with thought
Of evils sure to come, and by no art
Be shun'd.

Come hither, fool, that vainly think'st
Thine only is the art to plumb the depth
Of truth and wisdom. 'Tis a friend that calls,
And has some honest pity left for thee,
O thoughtless stubborn Sceptic. Look abroad,
And tell me, shall we blind chance ascribe
The scene so wonderful, so fair, and good?
Shall we no farther search than sense will lead,
To find the glorious cause that so delights
The eye and ear, and scatters all about
Ambrosial perfumes? O there is a hand
That operates unseen, and regulates
The vast machine we tread on. Yes, there is
Who first created the great world, a work
Of deep construction, complicately wrought,
Wheel within wheel? tho' 'tis in vain we strive
To trace remote effects thro' the thick maze
Of movements intricate, confus'd and strange,
Up to the great Artificer that made,
And guides the whole. What if we see him not?
No more can we behold the busy soul

That

That animates ourselves. Man to himself
 Is all a miracle. I cannot see
 The latent cause, yet such I know there is,
 That gives the body motion, nor can tell
 By what strange impulse, the so ready limb
 Performs the purposes of will. How then
 Shall thou or I, who cannot span ourselves,
 In this our narrow vessel, comprehend
 The being of a God. Go to the shore,
 Cast in thy slender angle, and draw out
 The huge Leviathan. Compress the deep,
 And shut it up within the hollow round
 Of the small hazel nut. Or freight the shell
 Of snail or cockle, with the glorious fun,
 And all the worlds that live upon his beams,
 The goodly apparatus that rides round
 The glowing axle-tree of heaven. Then come,
 And I will grant 'tis thine to scale the height
 Of wisdom infinite, and comprehend
 Secrets incomprehensible ; to know
 There is no God, and what the potent cause
 That the revolving universe upholds,
 And not requires a deity at hand.

O tell me not, most subtle disputant,
 That I shall die, the wick of life consum'd,
 And spite of all my hopes drop in the grave
 Never to rise again. Will the great God,

Who

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Who thus by annual miracle restores
 The perish'd year, and youth and beauty gives,
 By resurrection strange, where none was ask'd,
 Leave only man to be the scorn of time
 And sport of death? Shall only he one spring,
 One hasty summer, and one autumn see,
 And then a winter irredeemable
 Be doom'd, cast out, rejected, and despis'd?
 Tell me not so, or by thyself enjoy
 The melancholy thought. Am I deceiv'd?
 So let me be for ever. If I err,
 It is an error sweet and lucrative.
 For should not heaven a farther course intend
 Than the short race of life, I am at least
 Thrice happier than thee, ill-boding fool,
 Who striv'st in vain the awful doom to fly
 That I not fear. But I *shall* live again,
 And still on that sweet hope shall my soul feed.
 A medicine it is, that with a touch
 Heals all the pains of life; a precious balm,
 That makes the tooth of sorrow venomless,
 And of her hornet sting so keen disarms
 Cruel Adversity —

A truce to thought,
 And come, Alcanor, Julia, Isabel,
 Eliza come, and let us o'er the fields,
 Across the down, or thro' the shelving wood,

B

Wind

Who

Wind our uncertain way. Let fancy lead,
 And be it ours to follow, and admire,
 As well we may, the graces infinite
 Of nature. Lay aside the sweet resource
 That winter needs, and may at will obtain,
 Of authors chaste and good, and let us read
 The living page, whose ever character
 Delights and gives us wisdom. Not a tree,
 A plant, a leaf, a blossom, but contains
 A folio volume. We may read and read
 And read again, and still find something new,
 Something to please, and something to instruct,
 E'en in the noisome weed. See, ere we pass
 Alcanor's threshold, to the curious eye
 A little monitor presents her page
 Of choice instructions, with her snowy bells
 The lily of the vale. She nor affects
 The public walk, nor gaze of mid-day sun:
 She to no state or dignity aspires,
 But silent and alone puts on her suit,
 And sheds her lasting perfume, but for which
 We had not known there was a thing so sweet
 Hid in the gloomy shade. So when the blast
 Her sister tribes confounds, and to the earth
 Stoops their high heads that vainly were expos'd,
 She feels it not, but flourishes anew,
 Still shelter'd and secure. And so the storm
 That makes the high elm couch, and rends the oak,
 The

The humble lily spares. A thousand blows
That shake the lofty monarch on his throne,
We lesser folks feel not. Keen are the pains
Advancement often brings. To be secure,
Be humble ; to be happy, be content.
'Tis not all gold, Eliza, that the eye
Delights in. To command a coach and fix,
Be hight *my Lady*, or *your Grace*, to lead
In fashion, shine at court, be cloth'd in silk,
And make an artificial day, thick-set
With eye-distracting jewels, are but chains
That lift you from the crowd, to be the mock
Of hissing envy ; steps they are, that lead
Unwary maids to fortune's pillory,
To be the butt of undeserved reproach
And lying slander. Have you not observ'd
The idle school-boy, through a field of wheat
Scarce ripe, returning home, with what delight
He trims a switch, and strikes at the full ear
Most eminent, and still walks on and strikes ?
So Fortune sports with you, ye great, and still
As one above another climbs, condemns,
And makes him shorter by the head. Happy,
No doubt, Alcanor were, should it so chance
An eddy seize him in the stream of life,
And whirl him to a throne, of all this isle
Grand Metropolitan ; but trust me, Sir,
Nor Laud, nor Tillotson would stoop again

To bear the golden weight. Only with him
 Sweet peace abounds, and only he escapes
 The poison'd shafts of obloquy and wrong,
 Who hides his virtue in content ; and like
 This modest lily, wins our best regard
 By seeking to avoid it. Virtue too
 Will ever thus her lone retreat betray,
 And, spite of privacy, be sought and seen ;
 For she has fragrance that delights the sense
 Of Men and Angels, yea, of God himself.—

But come, we loiter. Pass unnotic'd by
 The sleepy crocus, and the staring daisy,
 The courtier of the sun. What see we there ?
 The love-sick cowslip, that her head inclines
 To hide a bleeding heart. And here's the meek
 And soft-ey'd primrose. Dandelion this,
 A college youth that flashes for a day
 All gold ; anon he doffs his gaudy suit,
 Touch'd by the magic hand of some grave Bishop,
 And all at once, by commutation strange,
 Becomes a Reverend Divine. How sleek !
 How full of grace ! and in that globous wig
 So nicely trim'd, unfathomable stores,
 No doubt, of erudition most profound :
 Each hair is learned, and his awful phiz,
 A well-drawn title-page, gives large account
 Of matters strangely complicate within.

Place

Place the two doctors each by each, my friends.
Which is the better? say. I blame not you,
Ye powder'd periwigs, that hardly hide,
With glossy suit and well-fed paunch to boot,
The understanding lean and beggarly.
But let me tell you, in the pompous globe
That rounds the dandelion's head, is couch'd
Divinity most rare. I never pass
But he instructs me with a still discourse,
That more persuades than all the vacant noise
Of pulpit rhetoric; for vacant 'tis,
And vacant must it be, by vacant heads
Supported.

Leave we them to mend, and mark
The melancholy hyacinth, that weeps
All night, and never lifts an eye all day.

How gay this meadow—like a gamesome boy
New-cloth'd, his locks fresh comb'd and powder'd,
he

All health and spirits. Scarce so many stars
Shine in the azure canopy of heav'n,
As king-cups here are scatter'd, interspers'd
With silver daisies.

See, the toiling swain
With many a sturdy stroke cuts up at last
The tough and finewy furze. How hard he fought

To win the glory of the barren waste.
 For what more noble than the vernal furze
 With golden baskets hung? Approach it not,
 For every blossom has a troop of swords
 Drawn to defend it. 'Tis the treasury
 Of Fays and Fairies. Here they nightly meet,
 Each with a burnish'd king-cup in his hand,
 And quaff the subtil ether. Here they dance
 Or to the village chimes, or moody song
 Or midnight Philomel. The ringlet see
 Fantastically trod. There Oberon
 His gallant train leads out, the while his torch
 The glow-worm lights and dusky night illumines.
 And there they foot it featly round, and laugh.
 The sacred spot the superstitious ewe
 Regards, and bites it not in reverence.
 Anon the drowsy clock tolls One—the cock
 His clarion sounds--the dance breaks off--the lights
 Are quench'd--the music hush'd--they speed away
 Swifter than thought, and still the break of day
 Outrun, and chafing midnight as she flies
 Pursue her round the globe. So Fancy weaves
 Her flimsy web, while sober reason fits,
 And smiling wonders at the puny work,
 A net for her; then springs on eagle wing,
 Constraint defies, and soars above the sun.
 Not always such her flight. For croaking dames
 And silly mothers oft conspire to clip

Her

Her infant wing, and feed her full with fears,
Till all her energy expires, and she,
Caught in the snare of fancy, lives and quakes
Pris'ner for life. O thoughtless managers!

See where the sky-blue periwinkle climbs
Up to the cottage eaves, and hides the loam
And dairy lattice with a thousand eyes,
Pentagonally form'd, to mock the skill
Of proud geometers. See there the fern
Unclenching all her fingers, to distract
The plodding theorist, who little fees,
And tortures reason for the rest. Behold,
And trust him not, the seed. So idle boys
Delight in bubbles. So rank errors live,
Truth dies, and ev'ry day we need a Brown
To set a jangling world to rights.

No more:

But mark with how peculiar grace, yon wood
That clothes the weary steep, waves in the breeze
Her sea of leaves; thither we turn our steps,
And by the way attend the chearful sound
Of woodland harmony that always fills
The merry vale between. How sweet the song
Day's harbinger attunes! I have not heard
Such elegant divisions drawn from art.
And what is he that wins our admiration?

B 4

A little

A little speck that floats upon the sun-beam.
 What vast perfection cannot nature crowd
 Into a puny point! The nightingale,
 Her solo anthem sung, and all that heard
 Content, joins in the chorus of the day.
 She, gentle heart, thinks it no pain to please,
 Nor, like the moody songsters of the world,
 Just shews her talent, pleases, takes affront,
 And locks it up in envy.

Now we hear

The golden wood-pecker, that like the fool
 Laughs loud at nothing. Now the restless pye,
 So pert and garrulous. A gossip she,
 And she has been to town to learn the news.
 O you shall hear her tell, how being hid
 In goody Grabson's beans, she overheard
 The tattling dames relate, ' Lord, what d'ye think!
 ' The Parson's to be married—Betty Bounce
 ' Will soon be brought to-bed—the 'Squire is sick
 ' Julia has parted with her maid—they say
 ' Eliza paints, and Isabel's a shrew—
 ' More taxes yet—the minister's a fool—
 ' Corn will be cheap—what shall we farmers do?
 ' My lady Bountiful has had a fit—
 ' Ay, let her die—they say she means to leave
 ' A fortune to the poor—good rest to her soul—
 ' She is no better than she should be,—that

' 'Twixt

' 'Twixt you and I—.' And so from morn to night
 Your scandal-monger prates, and tells you all
 The secret springs that actuate the state,
 The minister, the people. She can see,
 With half an eye, who stands, who falls, who rises;
 Who little merits, and who best deserves,
 And so she murders truth, and propagates
 The publick lie, extorting many a tear
 And many a sigh from wounded innocence.
 O, Isabel, if ev'ry idle word
 Have weight in heav'n, what deed so rarely good
 Can turn the scale in favour of that fool,
 Who prattles injury, and worth defames,
 From gay fifteen to tremulous fourscore!

Hark, how the cuckoo mocks the village bells,
 The jay attend, a very termagant
 That scolds all day. Yes, she has wedded been
 A full three weeks, and would be maid again.

Observe the glossy raven in the grass
 Making rude courtship to his negro mate.
 O he's a flatterer, and in his song,
 If such it may be call'd, her charms recites.
 He tells her of her bosom black as jet,
 Her taper leg, her penetrating eye,
 Her length of beak, her soft and silky wing,
 Her voice so tunable; then waddles round,

B 5

Begins

Begins again, and hopes she will be kind.
But all in vain. Alarm'd, he claps his wing
And flies; she much against her will pursues.

I love to see the little goldfinch pluck
The groundfil's feather'd feed, and twit and twit;
And then in bow'r of apple blossoms perch'd,
Trims his gay suit, and pay us with a song.
I would not hold him pris'ner for the world.

The chimney-haunting swallow too, my eye
And ear well pleases. I delight to see
How suddenly he skims the glassy pool,
How quaintly dips, and with a bullet's speed
Whisks by. I love to be awake, and hear
His morning song twitter'd to young-eyed day.

But most of all it wins my admiration,
To view the structure of this little work,
A bird's nest. Mark it well, within, without.
No tool, had he that wrought, no knife to cut,
No nail to fix, no bodkin to insert,
No glue to join; his little beak was all.
And yet how neatly finish'd. What nice hand
With ev'ry implement and means of art,
And twenty years apprenticeship to boot,
Could make me such another? Fondly then

We

We boast of excellence, whose noblest skill
Instinctive genius foils.

The bee observe ;
She too an artist is, and laughs at man
Who calls on rules the fightly hexagon
With truth to form ; a cunning architect,
That at the roof begins her golden work,
And builds without foundation. How she toils,
And still from bud to bud, from flow'r to flow'r,
Travels the livelong day. Ye idle drones,
That rather pilfer than your bread obtain
By honest means like these, look here, and learn
How good, how fair, how honourable 'tis
To live by industry. The busy tribes
Of bees so emulous, are daily fed
With heaven's peculiar manna. 'Tis for them
Unwearied alchymists, the blooming world
Nectarious gold distils. And bounteous heav'n,
Still to the diligent and active good,
Their very labour makes the certain cause
Of future wealth. The little traveller
That toils so chearfully from flow'r to flow'r,
For ever singing as she goes, herself
Bears on her wings and thighs the genial dust
The barren blossom needs, and the young seed
Impregnates for herself, else unprolific.

I cannot

I cannot love thy art, hard-hearted man,
 That teaches to depopulate the hive,
 And with the death of thousands win unhurt
 The precious treasures industry had earn'd.
 O burglary, how base, and back'd withal
 With murder! But what links of law can bind
 Imperious appetite, a haughty steed,
 That having rang'd his pasture free as air,
 Disdains the bit, and mounted once again,
 Runs madly on, high overleaps all bounds,
 And flings his rider to an early grave.

How peaceable and solemn a retreat
 This wood affords. I love to quit the glare
 Of sultry day for shadows cool as these.
 'The sober twilight of this winding way,
 Lets fall a serious gloom upon the mind
 That checks, but not appals. Such are the haunts
 Religion loves, a meek and humble maid
 Whose tender eye bears not the blaze of day.
 And here with Meditation hand in hand
 She walks, and feels her often wounded heart
 Renew'd and heal'd. Speak softly, we intrude.
 A whisper is too loud for solitude
 So mute and still.

So have I gone at night,
 When the faint eye of day was hardly clos'd,
 And turn'd the grating key that kept the door
 Of

Of church or chapel, to enjoy alone
The mournful horrors that impending night
And painted windows shed, along the dark
And scarce to be distinguish'd aisle. My foot
Has stood and paus'd, half startled at the sound
Of its own tip-toe pace. I've held my breath,
And been offended that my nimble heart
Should throb so audibly. I would not hear
Aught else disturb the silent reign of death,
Save the dull ticking of a restless clock.
That calls me home, and leads the thoughtful soul
Through mazes of reflection, till she feels
For what and whom she lives. Ye timid fair,
I never saw the sheeted ghost steal by,
I never heard th' unprison'd dead complain
And gibber in my ear, though I have lov'd
The yawning time of night, and travel'd round
And round again the mansions of the dead.
Yet I have heard, what fancy well might deem
Sufficient proof of both, the prowling owl
Sweep by, and with a hideous shriek awake
The church-yard echo, and I too have stood
Harrow'd and speechless at the dismal sound.
But here she fright us not. Such scenes as these
No ghost frequents. If any spirits here,
They are as gentle as the eve of day,
And only come to turn our wand'ring steps
From lurking danger. With what easy grace
This

This footway winds about. Shew me designs
 That please us more. What strict geometer
 Can carve his yew, his quickset, or his box,
 To half its elegance ? I would not see
 A thousand paces on, nor have my way
 Too strictly serpentine. If there be art,
 Let it be hid in nature. Wind the path,
 But be not bound to follow Hogarth's line.
 I grant it beauty, but too often seen,
 That beauty pleases not. I love to meet
 A sudden turn like this, that stops me short,
 Extravagantly devious, and invites
 Or up the hill or down ; then winds again,
 By reeling drunkard trod, and all at once
 Ends in a green-sward waggon way, that like
 Cathedral aisle compleatly roof'd with branches,
 Runs thro' the gloomy wood from top to bottom,
 And has at either end a gothic door
 Wide open. Yet we tarry not, nor tread
 With hardly sensible advance the way
 That mocks our toil ; but having gaz'd awhile
 At the still view below, the living scene
 Inimitable nature has hung up
 At the vault's end, we disappear again,
 And follow still the flexile path, conceal'd
 In shady underwood. Nor sometimes scorn
 Under the high majestic oak to sit,
 And comment on his leaf, his branch, his arm

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Paternally extended, his vast girth,
And ample hoop above. To him that loves
To walk with contemplation, ev'ry leaf
Affords a tale concluding with a moral.
The very hazel has a tongue to teach,
The birch, the maple, horn-beam, beech, and ash.

But these detain us not, for the faint sun
Puts on a milder countenance, and skirts
The undulated clouds that cross his way
With glory visible. His axle cools,
And his broad disk, tho' fervent, not intense,
Foretells the near approach of matron night.
Ye fair, retreat! Your drooping flowers need
Wholesome refreshment. Down the hedge-row
path

We hasten home, and only slack our speed
To gaze a moment at the custom'd gap,
That all so unexpectedly presents
The clear cerulean prospect down the vale.
Dispers'd along the bottom flocks and herds,
Hayricks and cottages, beside a stream
That silverly meanders here and there;
And higher up, corn-fields, and pastures, hops,
And waving woods, and tufts, and lonely oaks,
Thick interspers'd as Nature best was pleas'd.
I could not pass this view, nor stay to feast,
For all the wealth of Ind. Ingenious painter,
Why

Why leave a land so delicately cloth'd
 To gather beauties on a foreign shore ?
 'Twas here my Shakespear caught his living art.
 And who can paint like him ? To British eyes
 Shew British beauties. Who can choose but love ?
 Paint me the fair ones of my native isle ;
 Your canvases shall have charms no time can kill.
 The foreign belle, though fair, attracts me not.

Another moment pause, and to the vale
 Look back from the calm height we tread. See
 where

The gamefome school-boys, once again dismiss'd,
 Feel all the sweets of liberty, and drive
 The speedy hours away at the brisk game
 Of social cricket. It delights me much
 To see them run, and hear the chearful shout
 Sent up for victory—I cannot tell
 What rare effect the mingled sound may yield,
 Of huntsmen, hounds, and horns, to the firm heart,
 That never feels a pain for flying puffs ;
 To me it gives a pleasure far more sweet,
 To hear the cry of infant jubilee
 Exulting thus. Here all is innocent,
 And free from pain, which the resounding chase,
 With all its sturdy clamours cannot drown,
 E'en tho' it pour along a thund'ring peal,
 Strong as the deep artillery of heav'n.

Now

Now turn, and from the pleasant summit view
Alcanor's cell. Before, the garden see
So trim and spruce ; behind, the vast domain
Of cow and truant poney, that approves
All pastures but his own. Seen thro' the trees,
It seems, methinks, a parti-colour'd spot
Upon a fampler little Miss has work'd
To please her grandam. Love it still, ye fair,
Enjoy it still, Alcanor. Here who will
May feel a satisfaction truly sweet,
That York or Lambeth cannot give. Who strays,
Shall taste a thousand pains unfelt at home.
We fondly think the land of happiness
Is any where but here. And so we quit
The little bliss we own for less, and learn
From painful circumstance, the more we stray,
The more we want relief. The troubled heart
That harbours discontent, feeds a disease
No change of place, no medicine can cure.
Happy the man who truly loves his home,
And never wanders farther from his door
Than we have gone to-day ; who feels his heart
Still drawing homeward, and delights like us
Once more to rest his foot on his own threshold.

Alcanor, Julia, Isabel, Eliza,
Here let us pause, and ere still night advance
To shut the books of heav'n, look back and see
What

What commendable act has sprung to-day.
 Ah! who can boast? The little good we do
 In all the years of life will scarce outweigh
 The follies of an hour. Let this suffice,
 We had a heart that was inclin'd to do,
 Much better than we did.

Adieu, ye fair,

We leave you to your task, nor give you aid
 As wont. Rear'd by your hands alone, the flow'r
 Shall have a ruddier blush, a sweeter fragrance.
 Alcanor, come, and let us once again
 Descend into the valley, and enjoy
 The sober peace of the still summer's eve.
 We have no blush to lose; our freckled cheek
 The sun not blisters, nor the night-dew blasts.
 Such is the time the musing poet loves.
 Now vigorous imagination teems,
 And, warm with meditation, brings to birth
 Her admirable thought. I love to hear
 The silent rook to the high wood make way
 With hissing wing; to mark the wanton mouse,
 And see him gambol round the primrose head,
 'Till the still owl comes smoothly sailing by,
 And with a shrill *to-whit* breaks off his dance,
 And sends him scouring home; to hear the cur
 Of the night-loving partridge, or the swell
 Of the deep curfew from afar. And now

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It pleases me to mark the hooting owl,
Perch'd on the naked hop-pole, to attend
The distant cataract, or farmer's cur
That bays the northern lights or rising moon.
Then let me steal along the woody lane,
To hear thy song so various, gentle bird,
The queen of night, transporting Philomel ;
I name thee not to give my feeble lines
A grace else wanted, for I love thy song,
And often have I stood to hear thee sing,
When the clear moon, with Cytherean smile,
Emerging from an eastern cloud, has shot
A look of pure benevolence and joy
Into the heart of night. Yes, I have stood
And mark'd thy varied note, and frequent pause,
Thy brisk and melancholy mood, with heart
Sincerely pleas'd. And, Oh ! methought, no note
Can equal thine, sweet bird, of all that sing,
How easily the chief ! Yet have I heard
What pleases me still more : the human voice
In serious sweetness flowing from the heart
Of unaffected woman. I could hark
Till the round world dissolv'd, to the pure strain
Love teaches, gently Modesty inspires.
But tease me not, ye self-conceited fools,
Who with a loud, insufferable squall
Insult our ears, or hum a noiseless tune
Disdaining to be heard ; the while ye grin,

To

To shew a set of teeth newly repair'd,
Or shrink and shrug, to make the crowd admire
Your strange grimaces practis'd at the glafs.
O ! I abhor it. I had rather hear
A pedlar's kit besceape a dancing dog.

Melodious bird, good night ; good night, Al-
canor.

Let us not trespass on the hours of rest,
For we must steal from morning to repay them.
And who would lose the animated smile
Of dawning day, for th' austere frown of night ?
I grant her well accoutred in her suit
Of dripping sable, powder'd thick with stars,
And much applaud her as she passes by
With a replenish'd horn on either brow ;
But more I love to see awaking day
Rise with a fluster'd cheek ; a careful maid
That fears she has outslept the 'custom'd hour,
And leaves her chamber blushing. Hence to rest ;
I will not prattle longer to detain you
Under the dewy canopy of night.

So have I sung Alcanor and the fair,
Thro' the flow walk and long beloiter'd day
Of early summer. Let him read that will ;
And blame me not, if in an afternoon
I hardly stray a single mile from home.

It

It is my humour. Let him speed that will,
And fly like cannon-shot from post to post ;
I love to stop, and quit the public road,
To gain a summit, take a view, or pluck
An unknown blossom. What if I dismount,
And leave my steed to graze the while I sit
Under the pleasant lee, or idly roam
Athwart the pasture, diligent to mark
What passes next ? 'Tis English blood that flows
Under the azure covert of these veins.
I love my liberty ; and if I sing,
Will sing to please myself, bound by no rule,
The subject of no law.—I cannot think
The path of excellence is only hit
By servile imitation. In a path
Peculiarly his own great Handel went,
And justly merits our applause, tho' not
The Homer of his art. In a new path
Went Shakespear, nobly launching forth,
And who shall say he has not found perfection,
Tho' not a Sophocles. Ye shallow wits,
Who bids us coast it in the learned track,
Nor quit the sight of shore, there is an art
A world unknown, whose treasures only he
Shall spy, and well deserve, who proudly scorns
The wither'd laurel, and exulting steers
Far from the custom'd way. My slender bark
Perchance has rush'd into a boist'rous sea

That

That soon shall overwhelm her : yet I fear
No storms the furious elements can rouse,
And if I fail, shall deem it noble still
To founder in a brave attempt. Once more
The cheerful breeze sets fair ; we fill our sail
And scud before it. When the critic starts,
And angrily unties his bags of wind,
Then we lay to, and let the blast go by.



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AT once we rush into the heart of June,
And find Alcanor at the noon of day
Laborious in his garden. The warm sun
Is clouded, and the fluctuating breeze
Calls him from nicer labour to attend
The vegetable progress. Mark we now
A thousand great effects that spring from toil,
Unsung before. The martial pea observe,
In square battalions rang'd, line after line
Successive; the gay bean, her hindmost ranks
Stript of their blossoms; the thick-scatter'd bed
Of soporific lettuce; the green hill
Covered with cucumbers. All these and more,
As carrots, parsnips, onions, cabbages,
Potatoes, turnips, radishes, my Muse
Disdains not. She can stray well-pleas'd, and pluck
The od'rous leaf of marj'ram, baum, or mint;
Then smile to think how near the neighbourhood
Of rue and wormwood, in her thoughtful eye
Resembling

Resembling life, that ever thus brings forth
In quick succession bitter things and sweet.
Nor scorns she to observe the thriving sage,
That well becomes the garden of a clerk ;
The wholesome camomile, and fragrant thyme.
All these thy pains, Alcanor, propagate,
Support, and feed. Let the fat Doctor laugh,
Who only toils to satisfy the calls
Of appetite insatiate, and retires,
Good honest soul, offended at the world,
Of pure devotion, to his pipe and pot,
And whiffs and sleeps his idle hours away.
O ! let him laugh. A life of labour yields
Sweeter enjoyment than his gouty limbs
Have sense to feel. It gives the body health,
Agility, and strength, and makes it proof
Against the fang of pain. It stops the course
Of prodigal contagion, scares away
The scythe of time, and turns the dart of death.
And hence the mind unwonted force derives ;
Recruited oft by labour, to her work
Strong as a giant she returns, and rolls
Her Sisyphæan ball with wond'rous ease
Up to the mountain's top. O 'tis the soul
Of poesy and wit ! Then follow still
The happy task, nor scorn to feel, Alcanor,
How passing grateful 'tis to reap the fruits
Of willing toil. The board of industry,

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By her own labour frugally supplied,
 Gives to her food an admirable zest,
 Unknown to indolence, that half asleep
 With palateless indifference surveys
 The smoking feast of plenty.

I have stray'd

Wild as the mountain bee, and cull'd a sweet
 From ev'ry flow'r that beautified my way.
 Ah! how could I forget thy charms so long
 Surpassing Dorothy, the sweetest thing
 These bitter times afford. O let me seek!
 Thee fairest, foulest of the human race,
 And sing thy beauties, like the stingless drone,
 That, driven from the hive, a refuge seeks
 In the dank sewer or fane of Cloacin!
 See where she goes with vast becoming strides,
 And man-like majesty, swinging her arms,
 Alternate pendulums, that heavily
 Move to and fro, as I have seen in towns
 The handles of a pump. Who would not love?
 Celestial maid, my charming non-pareil,
 Turn to the supplicating voice that woos,
 And shed one sweet and soul-reviving smile
 Upon a captive poet. Let me see
 Yet once again the formidable row,
 From ear to ear, of never-cleaned teeth
 In saffron uniform. O let me see

C

Thy

Thy broad hystheric grin, thy shining face,
 And greasy locks, nor ever follow thus
 Unheard, thy slip-shod and undarned heel.
 Come, let me place thee by the flaunting belle
 That trips it lightly to the city ball.
 Stay, airy madam, why so hasty? stay,
 And learn who best deserves, or thou, or she.
 Is Dorothy uncleanly? so art thou.
 Her teeth are all her own, thine false and bor-
 row'd.

And should she to a meagre dentist pawn
 The comely row, 'tis ten to one thy lips
 Receive them next. O filthy usurpation!
 Who dares approach the lips of Dorothy,
 Shall find no doubt a healthful breath behind.
 Who thee salutes, by that fair mouth induc'd,
 Shall be astounded at the fœtid stench
 That issues from it. Health and youth are fled,
 And all their odours gone, seduc'd away
 By late debauch. Say, is that cheek thine own,
 Or borrow'd from the pencil? Has no art
 Been busy there to make the rose revive?
 Is all that fairness thine? No, squalid wretch,
 Thy hue is hateful:—But for thy perfumes,
 And the kind aid of paint and sweet pomade,
 We could not live within a thousand leagues
 Of such a fearful pest. The shining face
 Of graceless Dorothy, tho' far, far short

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Of what we deem most fair and worthy touch,
 Outdoes thy plaister'd cheek, as much as she
 May be herself outdone. Those greasy locks,
 That hang in ropes from her once-whiter cap,
 Grew on the head they grace. But where grew
 thine?

Bought of some lousy wench that would have bread
 Nor be at pains to earn it, or purloin'd

At midnight hour from a new-buried corpse.

In rags is Dorothy, in silk art thou;

But she in rags is honest! knavish, lewd,

And discontent art thou, tho' clad in silk.

Change dress, and who excels? Or search the
 mind,

And see who triumphs there? It may be thine

To speak a dialect to her unknown,

To lisp in terms of fashion, and retail

A few mean scraps of French; but, trust me, she

Her native language understands as well,

Less taught. She too can boast a store as large

Of useful knowledge, for ye both have none.

But ignorance in her was the hard lot

Of strict necessity:—She could not buy

Golden improvement, for she finds the day

Scarce equal to her toil, tho' all she asks

Be bread. In you distaste and idleness,

Money and time ill-spent, were all the cause.

Thy care was only to be gay without,

And beggarly within. For what know you
 Of Virtue, or Religion, or aught else,
 Deserving praise? You write, perhaps, and read:
 To what good purpose? To corrupt the soul,
 And give it back to him who gave it you,
 So spotted, as to make his angels blush,
 And cause the Deity himself to turn
 And hide his countenance. O blame not time!
 The mind that thirsts no obstacle can thwart.
 It has a thousand shifts to sink the mine
 And purify its gold. You may be stiff,
 And look on Dolly with disdainful eye,
 But she's your equal here, and you must stand
 Much after her in heav'n.

Is there a man

For wisdom eminent? seek him betimes.
 He will not shun thee, though thy frequent foot
 Wear out the pavement at his door. Ye fair,
 Be sedulous to win the man of sense;
 And fly the empty fool. Shame the dull boy
 Who leaves at college what he learnt at school,
 And whips his academic hours away,
 Cas'd in unwrinkled buck-skin and tight boots,
 More studious of his hunter than his books.
 O! had ye sense to see what powder'd apes
 Ye oft admire, the idle boy for shame
 Would lay his racket and his maff aside,

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And love his tutor and his desk. Time was
When ev'ry woman was a judge of arms
And military exploit : 'twas an age
Of admirable heroes. And time was
When women dealt in Hebrew, Latin, Greek ;
No dunces then, but all were deeply learn'd.
I do not wish to see the female eye
Waste all its lustre at the midnight lamp ;
I do not wish to see the female cheek
Grow pale with application. Let their care
Be to preserve their beauty ; that secur'd,
Improve the judgment, that the loving fair
May have an eye to know the man of worth,
And keep secure the jewel of her charms
From him that ill deserves. Let the spruce beau,
That lean, sweet-scented, and palav'rous fool,
Who talks of honour and his sword, and plucks
The man that dares advise him by the nose ;
That puny thing that hardly crawls about,
Reduc'd by wine and women, yet drinks on,
And vapours loudly o'er his glass, resolv'd
To tell a tale of nothing, and outswear
The northern tempest ; let that fool, I say,
Look for a wife in vain, and live despis'd.

I would that all the fair ones of this isle
Were such as one I knew. Peace to her soul,
She lives no more. And I a genius need

To paint her as she was. Most like, methinks,
That amiable maid the poet drew,
Stealing a glance from heav'n, and call'd her
Portia.

Happy the man, and happy sure he was,
So wedded. Blest with her, he wander'd not
To seek for happiness; 'twas his at home.
How often have I paus'd, and chain'd my tongue,
To hear the music of her sober words!
How often have I wonder'd at the grace
Instruction borrow'd from her eye and cheek!
Surely that maid is worth a nation's gold,
Who has such rich resources in herself
From them she rears. A mother well inform'd
Entails a blessing on her infant charge
Better than riches; an unfailing cruse
She leaves behind her, which the faster flows
'The more 'tis drawn; where ev'ry soul may feed,
And nought diminish of the public stock.

Shew me a maid so fair in all your ranks,
Ye crowded boarding-schools. Are ye not apt
To taint the infant mind, to point the way
To fashionable folly, strew with flow'rs
The path of vice, and teach the wayward child
Extravagance and pride? Who learns in you
'To be the prudent wife, the pious mother?
To be her parents' staff, or husband's joy?

'Tis

'Tis you dissolve the links that once held fast
Domestic happiness. 'Tis you untie
The matrimonial knot ; 'tis you divide
The parent and his child. O ! 'tis to you
We owe the ruin of our dearest bliss.
The best instructor for the growing lass
Is she that bare her. Let *her* first be taught,
And we shall see the path of virtue smooth
With often treading. She can best dispense
That frequent medicine the soul requires,
And make it grateful to the tongue of youth,
By mixture of affection. She can charm
When others fail, and leave the work undone.
She will not faint, for she instructs her own.
She will not torture, for she feels herself.
So education thrives, and the sweet maid
Improves in beauty, like the shapeless rock
Under the sculptor's chisel, till at length
She undertakes her progress thro' the world,
A woman fair and good, as child for parent,
Parent for child, or man for wife could wish.
Say, man, what more delights thee than the fair ?
What should we not be patient to endure
If they command ? We rule the noisy world,
But they rule us. Then teach them how to guide,
And hold the rein with judgment. Their applause
May once again restore the quiet reign

Of virtue, love, and peace, and yet bring back
The blush of folly, and the shame of vice.

I ride without a rein, and thence it is
My ambling Pegafus oft turns aside,
And quits the public way for the cool lane,
Or bears me to the door of many a fool
I had not else observ'd. No wonder then
I rap so loudly at your gilded doors,
Ye female guides, that lead our lambs astray ;
And bid you be at home, ye thoughtless dames,
Who trust your offspring with the hungry wolf.
Once more I turn, and once again observe
Alcanor in his garden ; not alone,
For Isabel is there. The day declines,
And now the falling sun offends them not.
She rears the fainting flow'r, and feeds its root.
Ye botanists, I cannot talk like you,
And give to ev'ry flow'r its name and rank,
'Taught by Linnæus ; yet I find in all
Or known or unknown, in the garden rais'd,
Or nurtur'd in the hedge-row, or the field,
A secret virtue, that attracts my eye
And meliorates my heart. And much I love
To see the fair one bind the straggling pink,
Cheer the sweet rose, the lupin, and the stock,
And lend a staff to the still gadding pea.
I cannot count the number of the stars,

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Nor call them by their names, much less relate
What vegetable tribes Alcanor loves,
The fair ones rear. I will not swell my song
With the proud list of forces led from Greece,
Or angels tumbled headlong into hell.
Yet let me praise the garden-loving maid,
Who innocently thus concludes the day.
Ye fair, it well becomes you. Better thus
Cheat time away, than at the crowded rout,
Rustling in silk, in a small room, close-pent,
And heated e'en to fusion ; made to breathe
A rank contagious air, and fret at whist,
Or sit aside to sneer and whisper scandal.

In such a silent, cool, and wholesome hour,
The Author of the world came down from Heav'n
To walk in Paradise, well-pleas'd to mark
The harmless deeds of new-created man.
And sure the silent, cool, and wholesome hour
May still delight him, our atonement made.
Who knows but as we walk he walks unseen,
And sees, and well approves the cheerful task
The fair one loves ; he breathes upon the pink
And gives it odor, touches the sweet rose
And makes it glow, beckons the ev'ning dew
And sheds it on the lupin and the pea :
Then smiles on her, and covers all her cheek
With gay good humour, happiness, and health.

So all are passing sweet, and the young Eve
Feels all her pains rewarded, all her joys
Perfect and unimpair'd. But who can love,
Oh heav'nly temper, to frequent your walks,
Ye fashion-loving belles. The human soul
Your pestilent amusements hates ; how then
Shall he approve, who cannot look on guilt ?

So day by day Alcanor and the fair
Attend the garden studious, soon as eve
Her cooling odours sheds, and the large sun
Grows dim, and shoots his mellow rays oblique.

Nor these the only pleasures summer yields.
They often wander at the close of day
Along the shady lane, or thro' the wood,
To pluck the ruddy strawberry, or smell
The perfum'd breeze that all the fragrance steals
Of honey-suckle, blossom'd beans, or clover ;
Or haply rifles from the new-made rick
The hay's sweet odour, or the sweeter breath
Of farmer's yard, where the still patient cow
Stands o'er the plenteous milk-pail ruminant.
Sometimes they stray at highest noon, when day
His garish eye has veil'd, and idly range
The new-mown pasture, mark the distant forge
Deep in the valley, jutting in low roof

Against

Against the stream, close by the trickling flood-
gate,

And thither turn their steps. I love to see
How hardly some their frugal morsel earn ;
It gives my own a zest, and serves to damp
The longing appetite of discontent.

See, pale and hollow-eyed, in his blue shirt,
Before the scorching furnace, reeking stands
The weary smith. A thund'ring water-wheel
Alternately uplifts his pond'rous pair
Of roaring bellows. He torments the coal
And stirs the melting ore, till all resolv'd
Into a perfect lump ; then seizes fast
With his strong forceps the unwieldy mass,
And drags it glowing to the anvil. Eye
Can scarce attend it, so intense the heat.
He bears it all, and with one arm lets loose
Th' impatient stream. The heavy wheel moves
round,

And ever and again lets fall the loud
And awful hammer, that confounds the ear,
And makes the firm earth shake. He turns the
mass,

And works it into shape ; till cooler grown,
He stops his wheel, and once again provokes
The dying cinders, and his half-done work
Buries in fire. Again he drags it forth,

And

And once more lifts it to the sturdy anvil.
 There beaten long, and often turn'd, at length
 'Tis done. He bears it hissing to the light,
 An iron bar. Behold it well. What is't,
 But a just emblem of the lot of virtue.
 For in this naughty world she cannot live,
 Nor rust contract, nor mingle with alloy.
 So the great Judge, to make her worthy heav'n,
 Submits her to the furnace and the anvil;
 'Till molten, bruised, and batter'd, she becomes
 Spotless and pure, and leaves her dross behind.

And who shall grieve, and think his lot severe
 Who well considers this? The slavish smith,
 That wipes his flowing brow so fast, his bread
 Earns at the bitter cost, expence of health.
 In summer's hottest day he feeds his forge,
 And stands expos'd to the distressful fire
 That almost broils him dead. Yet what complaint
 Makes he at fortune? He is well content
 To toil at his infernal work, and breathe
 A torrid atmosphere, so he may earn
 A scant subsistence in this pinching world.
 Ye idle rich, consider this, nor aim
 At places, pensions, titles, coronets.
 Ye lazy clerks, consider this, nor sue
 For benefices, canonries, and mitres.
 All might inherit ease, would they not long

To

To fill a braver office, and at times
Look down, and see how hard the drudging poor
Toil for a bare subsistence. Be content,
And happiness shall turn and follow you.
But she is coy as the unwedded maid,
And he that follows her is vexed in vain,
And may pursue for ever. Let her fly;
Shy fool, I follow not. If thou relent,
Feast at my board, and be a welcome guest.

So Summer glides along, and happy he,
Who like Alcanor holds occasion fast,
And, duty done, enjoys the summer lounge.

So have I wander'd ere those days were past
That childhood calls her own. Ah! happy days
That recollection loves, unstain'd with vice,
Why were ye gone so soon? Did I not love
To quit my desk and ramble in the field,
To gather austere berries from the bush,
Or search the coppice for the clust'ring nut?
Did I not always with a shout applaud,
That welcome voice the holiday announc'd?
Say, you that knew me, you that saw me oft
Shut up my book elate, and dance for joy.
O liberty! how passing sweet art thou
To him that labours at the constant oar
Sorely reluctant, to the pining boy
That loves enlargement, and abhors his chain.

So

So on thy banks too, Isis, have I stray'd,
A tassel'd student. Witness you that shar'd
My morning walk, my ramble at high noon,
My evening voyage, an unskilful tar,
To Godstow bound, or some inferior port,
For strawberries and cream. What have we found
In life's austerer hours, delectable
As the long day so loiter'd? O ye grave
And serious heads, who guard the twin retreats
Of British learning, give the honest boy
His due indulgence. Let him range the field,
Frequent the public walk, and stoutly tug
The ever-yielding oar. But mark him well,
And if he turn aside to vice or folly,
Shew him the rod, and let him feel you prize
The parent's happiness, the public good.
And you, ye thoughtless young, deem it not hard
If old experience check your wild career,
And call you home to think. Love the kind hand
That steadily corrects, and be not apt
To leave the student's for the jockey's part,
To dress, to swear, to gamble, whore, and drink.
For so the taylor, gamester, rogue, and punk,
The cook, the surgeon, and the vintner thrive,
Learning decays, and the book-vender starves;
Save only he that reading circulates,
And earns a living of the smarting boy,
Who all day long lies writhing on his couch

Repentant,

Repentant, feeding his distemper'd mind
 With plays and novels. Will ye thus repay
 Parental goodness? Will ye thus apply
 Parental bounty? Who can wonder then,
 The parent's curse on Alma-mater lights,
 And the wide world re-echoes with the sound
 Of terrible reproach. For who can live
 And not condemn, who sees the swagg'ring dunce,
 The knave, the drunkard, and the debauchee,
 Mix with the sacred band of God's apostles?



N O W

NOW comes July, and with his fervid noon
 Unnerves the hand of toil. The mower sleeps—
 The sun-burnt maid rakes feebly—the hot swain
 Pitches his load reluctant—the faint steer,
 Lashing his sides, draws fulkily along
 The slow encumber'd wain. The hedge-row now
 Delights, or the still shade of silent lane,
 Or cool impending arbour, there to read,
 Or talk and laugh, or meditate and sleep.

There let me sit to see the brewing storm
 Collect its dusky horrors and advance
 To bellow sternly in the ear of night ;
 To see th' Almighty electrician come,
 Making the clouds his chariot. Who can stand
 When he appears ? The conscious creature flies,
 And skulks away, afraid to see his God
 Charge and recharge his dreadful battery.
 For who so pure his lightning might not blast,

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And be the messenger of justice ? Who
Can stand expos'd, and to his judge exclaim,
' My heart is cleansed, turn thy storm away.'
Fear not, ye fair, who with the naughty world
Have seldom mingled. Mark the rolling storm,
And let me hear you tell, when morning comes,
With what tremendous howl the furious blast
Blew the large show'r in heavy cataract
Against your window ; how the keen, the quick,
And vivid lightning quiver'd on your bed,
And how the deep artillery of heav'n
Broke loose, and shook your coward habitation.
Fear not ; for if a life of innocence,
And that which we deem virtue here below,
Can hold the forked bolt, ye may presume
To look and live. Yet be not bold, but shew
Some pious dread, some grave astonishment.
For all our worthy deeds are nothing worth,
And if the solemn tempest cut us short
In our best hour, we are in debt to heav'n.

So when the trumpet blew and waxing loud
And louder still, became exceeding loud,
That all the people trembled, and the mount
Smoak'd at the touch of God, and shook, a voice
Commanded priests and people to beware,
Not to break thro' and gaze, lest the pure God,
Whose

Whose spotless nature cannot brook the sight
Of aught un sanctified, break forth and slay.

The storm subsided, and the day begun,
Who would not walk along the sandy way,
To smell the shower's fragrance, see the sun
With his sheer eye ascend the zenith joyous,
Mark the still-rumbling cloud crowding away
Indignant, and embrace the gentle breeze,
That idly wantons with the dewy leaf,
And shakes the pearly rain-drop to the ground.
How sweet the incense of reviving flow'rs !
Ye must abroad, ye fair. The angry night
Has done you mischief. Ev'ry plant will need
Your kindly hand to rear its falling head.

Come not St. Swithin with a cloudy face,
Ill-ominous ; for old tradition says,
If Swithin weep, a deluge will ensue,
A forty days of rain. The swain believes,
And blesses sultry Swithin if he smiles,
But curses if he frowns. So crazy dames
Teach the apt boy a thousand ugly signs,
Which riper judgment cannot shake aside.
And so the path of life is rough indeed,
And the poor boy feels double smart, compell'd
To trudge it barefoot on the naked flint.
For what is judgment and the mind inform'd,
Your

Your christian armour, gospel-preparation,
But sandals for the feet, that tread with ease,
Nor feel those harsh asperities of life,
Which ignorance and superstition dread.
I much admire we ever should complain
That life is sharp and painful, when ourselves
Create the better half of all our woe.
Who can he blame who shudders at the sight
Of his own candle, and foretels with grief
A winding sheet? who starts at the red coal
That bounces from his fire, and picks it up,
His hair on end, a coffin? spills his salt,
And dreads disaster? dreams of pleasant fields,
And smells a corpse? and ever shuns with care
The unpropitious hour to pare his nails?
Such fears but ill become a soul that thinks.
Let time bring forth what heavy plagues it will.
Who pain anticipates, that pain feels twice,
And often feels in vain. Yet, tho' I blame
The man who with too busy eye unfolds
The page of time, and reads his lot amiss,
I can applaud to see the smiling maid,
With pretty superstition pluck a rose,
And lay it by till Christmas. I can look
With much complacency on all her arts
To know the future husband. Yes, ye fair,
I deem it good to steal from years to come
A share of happiness. We could not live,

Did

Did we not hope to-morrow would produce
A better lot than we enjoy to-day.
Hope is the dearest med'cine of the soul,
A sweet oblivious antidote, that heals
The better half of all the pains of life.

Now o'er his corn, the sturdy farmer looks,
And swells with satisfaction to behold
The plenteous harvest that repays his toil.
We too are gratified, and feel a joy
Inferior but to his, partakers all
Of the rich bounty Providence has strew'd
In plentiful profusion o'er the field.
Tell me, ye fair, Alcanor, tell me, what
Is to the eye more cheerful, to the heart
More satisfactory, than to look abroad,
And from the window see the reaper strip,
Look round, and put his sickle to the wheat?
Or hear the early mower whet his scythe,
And see where he has cut his sounding way,
E'en to the utmost edge of the brown field
Of oats or barley? What delights us more,
Than studiously to trace the vast effects
Of unabated labour? to observe
How soon the golden field stands thick with
sheaves?
How soon the oat and bearded barley fall,
In frequent lines before the hungry scythe?

The

The clatt'ring team now comes, and the swarth
hind

Leaps down, and throws his frock aside, and plies
The shining fork. Down to the stubble's edge
The easy wain descends half built, then turns
And labours up again. From pile to pile
With rustling step the swain proceeds, and still
Bears to the groaning load the well-poiz'd sheaf.
The gleaner follows, and with studious eye,
And bended shoulders traverses the field
To find the scatter'd ear, the perquisite
By heaven's decree assign'd to them that need,
And neither sow nor reap. Ye that have sown,
And reap so plenteously, and find your barns
Too narrow to contain the harvest giv'n,
Be not severe, and grudge the needy poor
So small a portion. Scatter many an ear,
Nor let it grieve you to forget a sheaf
And overlook the loss. For he that gave
Will readily forgive the purpos'd wrong
Done to yourselves ; nay more, will twice repay
The generous neglect. The field is clear'd ;
No sheaf remains ; and now the empty wain
A load less honourable waits. Vast toil succeeds,
And still the team retreats, and still returns
To be again full-fraught. Work on, ye swains,
And make one autumn of your lives, your toil
Still new, your harvest never done. Work on,
And

with

The

Our ev'ning's homage to the blooming hop.
Spare him, ye swains, pernicious insects spare,
Ye howling tempests, come not near my joy,
But let him hang till I have gaz'd my fill.
Then shall he fall, and his gay honours shed,
And your forbearance plenteously repay
With his abundant gold. Long let us stray,
Enjoy the grateful covert, and admire
The one continued cluster over-head
Of blossoms interwoven, and depending
E'en to the touch and smell. Long let us stray,
And ever as we come to the flat mead
And quit the garden with reluctance, then
When we behold the smiling valley spread
In gay luxuriance far before us, sheep
And oxen grazing, till the eye is staid,
The sinuous prospect turning from the view,
And all above us to the right and left
Enchanted woodland to the topmost hill,
Then let the village bells, as often wont,
Come swelling on the breeze, and to the sun
Half-set, ring merrily their ev'ning round.
I ask not for the cause. It matters not
What swain is wedded, what gay lass is bound
To love for ay, to cherish and obey.
It is enough for me to hear the sound
Of the remote exhilarating peal,
Now dying all away, now faintly heard,

And

And now with loud and musical relapse
Its mellow changes pouring on the ear.

So have I stood at eve on Isis' banks,
To hear the merry Christ-church bells ring round.
So have I sat too in thy honour'd shades
Distinguish'd Magdalen, on Cherwell's brink,
To hear thy silver Wolfey tones so sweet.
And so too have I paus'd and held my oar,
And suffer'd the slow stream to bear me home,
No speed requir'd while Wykeham's peal was up.



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Now let September and October come,
Twin months of slaughter. Persecution starts,
And ere the dewy day be half awake
Begins her bloody work. The fields are throng'd
With licens'd murderers, who slay for sport.
So when the jealous Herod gave the word,
The cruel ruffian thirsted for the blood
Of helpless innocents. And so the sword,
Another Herod reigning, was let loose,
To spill the blood of sleeping Hugonots.
Alcanor joins them not. He envies none
The pleasures of the field, and much admires
To hear the squabble and the loud harangue,
And all for game; to see the British soul
So puny grown, it quarrels for a feather.
'Tis a mean wretch, and scarce deserves to live
That cannot find amusements void of pain.

D

O undeserv-

O undeserving parent, that neglects
 To train the infant boy to deeds humane.
 See how his sports, his pastimes, dearest child,
 Are all to be indulged, whether he choose
 To whip his nurse, to lash the sleeping puppy,
 Or pinch the tail of unoffending puss.
 Go, catch the furly beetle, and suspend
 The harmless pris'ner by the wing or tail
 To make the booby laugh. But if so loud
 His well-deserv'd rebuke, the timid child
 Stands off alarm'd, then let him see thee crush
 The thing he fears. Or give it liberty,
 Not unconstrained, as heav'n bestow'd it. No,
 Set the gall'd pris'ner free, but lock his chain
 Full-fast about him. Drive him to the field,
 But pluck no arrow from his side. He's gone,
 And feels that liberty is wond'rous sweet,
 Tho' the crook'd pin fast fixt, and trailing thread,
 Admit no remedy. A while he lives—
 His thread clings fast—he flutters, faints and dies.
 Go, Tom, a ladder bring, and reach the nest.
 'Tis but a sparrow's, and 'twill serve
 To pacify the boy. What if the dam
 In patient expectation sits, and hopes
 Another day shall all her cares reward,
 And bring to light her helpless progeny?
 Forth from her high maternal office dragg'd
 With rude indignity, behold she comes

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A joyful victim to the callous boy.
He with delight her ruffled plumes surveys,
Seizes her nest, and the dear charge purloins ;
Then with a frantic laugh down drops the eggs,
And blindfold hops to crush them as he goes.
Ah ! hapless bird, yet happy still, if this
Be all the pain thy cruel foe intends.
Ah ! what avail'd thy labour of an age
To weave the genial nest, with many a root
And many a straw far-fetch'd ? 'Twas all in vain.
Half-starv'd Grimalkin claims thee for his prey,
And in his cruel paw fast-clutch'd devours
Relentless. Or the boy aware, himself
Cuts short existence, and allots to puffs
Only the fever'd head. Ingenious fool,
Pert executioner, behold the blood
Of parent, and of offspring. Grin amain ;
O thou hast done a deed that Heav'n abhors.
Let the wise parent laugh to see how well
His looby boy has learn'd to be humane.
Let him applaud the bloody deed, and spare
The well-earn'd rod. In thee, great state,
Eternal glory of the Gentile world,
Just Athens, had the beardless boy presum'd
A deed so villainous, the public arm
Had the mean youth chastis'd, till it had wak'd
A soul humane and sensible of wrong.
Behold and mark the sturdy boy, at length

Grown up to man (if such he may be call'd
Possessing nothing human but the shape)
What are his sports ? and how delights the dunce
From morn to night to spend the live-long day ?
Can the dark Ethiopian change his skin ?
Or can the Leopard at his will be white,
And lay his spots aside ? From morn to eve
See how he toils with generous intent
'To be the murd'rer of the tim'rous hare,
'To win the brush of Reynard nobly skill'd,
To vex the badger ; or with cruel joy
Stoops o'er the cock-pit, eager to behold
The dying struggles of poor Chanticleer.
'Twas nature taught the gen'rous bird to fight,
And drive the bold intruder from his roost,
In care for thee, mean wretch, who hast supplied
The weapon nature kindly had refus'd,
Or made to strike in vain. Now mark his gait,
When morning hardly dawns, and from the hutch
He lets the full-ear'd pointer loose to range,
Well arm'd is he, within with morning dram,
Without with old furtout, thick shoes, and hose
Of leather, button'd to the buckskin'd knee.
So forth he fares, brave knight ; but first he
primes
And loads his burnish'd piece, then hangs his
pouch,
His powder-horn, and whip with whistle tipt

On his broad shoulders. Let me not forget,
What he might well forget, th' important bag,
To be ere long (for so he thinks) well lin'd
With pheasant, partridge, snipe, or tardy quail.
So mounts the popping Hudibras or style
Or crackling hedge, or leaps the muddy ditch,
His armour clatt'ring as he goes. I see
Where he has swept the silver dew away
Across the pasture. Now he climbs the gate,
And heys his dog to run the stubble round,
While he stands still, or scarcely moves a pace.
So have I seen the hasty minute-hand
Run round and round, while th' other idly stood,
Or seem'd to stand, and ever and anon
Bray'd loud to set him on his way again.
Take heed, take heed. With nose infallible
The silent pointer winds toward the game.
Now motionless he stands, one foot lift up,
His nostril wide distended, and his tail
Unwag'd. Now speed my hero of the gun,
And when the sudden covey springs, let fly,
And miss them all. O I rejoice to see
When our amusements are so innocent
They give no pain at all. But spare the whip,
And if the wary covey springs too soon,
Let Sancho still be safe; and let not rage
Prompt thee to stamp upon his guiltless neck
Till the blood issues from his mouth and nose:

Much less let fly upon the faithful cur
The volley fate has spar'd, for he is staunch,
And true to thee as thou art false to him.

O thoughtless world, that will not be at pains
To cultivate humanity in youth.

'Tis hence we laugh at woe, and ev'ry day
Unpitying hear the cries of half a world
Vex'd with the galling scourge of slavery.
My eye is cast on Britain's western isles,
And I behold a patient slave grown faint
Under the lash. Inhuman dog, forbear.
The man who now lies bleeding at thy feet
Was once a monarch. To the bloody field
He led a num'rous tribe, attach'd by deeds
Of pure affection to their leader. He
No laws of mutiny had fram'd, nor fear'd
To see desertion thin his crowded ranks.
Bravely he fought, and hardly would submit,
Surviving only he. Then first he knew
What 'twas to faint, when looking for his friends
He saw them dead and bleeding at his side.
Nor had he then let fall his well-strung bow,
And shook the poison'd quiver from his side.
Were there one arrow left, or still surviv'd
He for whose life and happiness he fought,
His only son. Him reeking in his blood
The hapless monarch saw, and could no more.

Then

Then spare him yet. What tho' he left his task,
And sought the friendly shade to vent his grief
Yet recent. True, he slept, and at an hour
When all the world was busy. 'Twas the call
Of sympathizing nature, that would pour
One balm at least upon his countless wounds.
Poor soul, he slept, and fancy to his mind
Brought back again the days he once had seen.
Forth from his hut he went, his only son
And wife (now more than widow) by his side.
He tipped his arrow, strung his bow, and shot.
The stricken bird is her's, and her's the deer.
These are his choicest gifts. With these he seeks
His humble palace once again; there sits
And eats his plain and temperate repast,
And the too-fleeting hours beguiles with talk
Of twenty thousand dangerous escapes
From cruel tiger, or more cruel man.
And was this little happiness too much?
The sword of justice surely will unsheath,
Nor fall in vain upon these guilty isles.
Cross not again the proud Atlantic wave,
With hellish purpose to enslave the free,
Or load the pris'ner with eternal chains,
For he is Man as thou art. Not for thee,
And only thee, did God's creative Word
Call into being this vast work, the world.
Nor yet for thee that Word incarnate shed
His precious blood. Go, false and cruel tyrant,

Reign in the forests of thy native isle,
 And let the prowling savage reign in his.
 Let him enjoy the little blifs he owns,
 Or give him more. Make not that little less,
 For Adam was his fire, and Adam thine ;
 And he shall share redemption too with thee,
 With thee, and me, and all this Gentile world,
 If we deserve to rank in brotherhood
 With one we wrong so much. Content were he
 To tread the burning desert, feel the sun
 Shoot his fierce rays direct upon his head,
 And earn the little plenty his wild state
 Affords, with hunter's toil. Content were he
 To be an humble pensioner at best
 Of the grim lion ; but the cursed hand
 Of brutal avarice that peace destroys,
 That little peace the lordly lion spares.

September half run out, the day returns,
 Remember'd oft with awful reverence
 And pious love of thee, All-seeing Power,
 Who follow'st virtue wheresoe'er she roves,
 Her shield and buckler. On the sunny down
 Eliza stray'd. Ah ! why alone ? 'Twas so
 The tempter vanquish'd Eve ; 'twas so she fell.
 She stray'd and mus'd, she pluck'd a flow'r and fung.
 She knew no fear, accusom'd oft to range
 The pleasant hill, and deeming none less good,
 Less honest than herself. But such the world

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We cannot find the place, howe'er remote
 From public notice, that escapes the search
 Of prying lust, and keeps secure and safe
 The jewel virtue. An Hibernian whelp,
 Strong as the tiger, subtle as the fox,
 Saw and was pleas'd. No bar to him his vow
 Made at the altar, to be constant still
 To her he wedded there. In his false heart
 He fed adult'rous hope, he couch'd and flunk,
 And with a leer the solitary down
 Survey'd, far as the jealous eye can reach.
 * So Satan lurk'd, and joy'd to find alone
 Ingenious Eve; and he his proem tun'd
 With flattery and lies, and so didst thou.
 Into the heart of Eve his words made way;
 Eliza heard not thine. For she had mark'd
 And knew her tempter; she had well observ'd,
 Unknown to thee, thy often-practis'd wiles.
 What wonder then thy eulogy was vain?
 Thy large account of honour and of wealth
 Mov'd only her derision, nor could win
 One smile, one kiss, one look of approbation.
 Here had thy passion ceas'd, thou might'st at least
 Have challeng'd honour with the fiend of Hell.
 But foil'd and still repuls'd, thy baser soul
 Had meaner shifts to try. Her reason proof,

* Milton.

Thy next resource unmanly violence.
 What guilty marks left not thy greedy hand
 Upon the fair one's arm ? so mighty thou
 To combat virtue, to assail a maid
 No match for thee but in so good a cause.
 Yet hadst thou vanquish'd, but a pow'r unseen
 Approv'd her efforts, and resisted thine.
 What saw'st thou, coward, to be put to flight
 Swift as the hostile arrow ? Mark my words.
 The man of noble purpose nothing daunts,
 No, not a falling world. He were compos'd
 And stedfast as a rock, tho' floods of fire
 The world and all its fellows swept away,
 And he beheld a UNIVERSE IN FLAMES.
 Then was the mighty foil'd, the cunning caught.
 And yet he blushes not. Accus'd, he starts,
 Protests his innocence, appeals to justice,
 Unlocks the copious fountain of his eye,
 And who can say it is not strange and piteous ?
 Yet why decays his honour spite of tears,
 Of protestations and appeals, of threats,
 And public insolence ? Ah me ? I fear
 Eliza may forgive thee, but in vain ;
 And tho' insulted Justice slumber here,
 She will arraign thee at the bar of Heaven,
 And spite of Charity the wrong repay.

The happy morning comes, expected long
 By lads and lasses. Soon as light appears,

The

The swain is ready in his Sunday frock,
And calls on Nell to trip it to the fair.
The village bells are up, and jangling loud
Proclaim the holiday. The clam'rous drum
Calls to the puppet-shew. The groaning horn
And twanging trumpet speak the sale begun,
Of articles most rare and cheap. Dogs bark
Astounded at the noise. Old women laugh,
Boys shout, and the grave Doctor mounts with glee
His crowded scaffold, struts, and makes a speech;
Maintains the virtue of his salve for corns,
His worm-cake and his pills, puffs his known skill,
And shews his kettle, silver knives and forks,
Ladle and cream-pot, and to crown the whole,
The splendid tankard. Andrew grins, and courts
The gaping multitude, till Tom and Sue
And Abigail and Ned their shoulders shrug,
And laugh and whisper, and resolve to sport
The solitary shilling. See produc'd
Their unwash'd handkerchiefs. Ah! simple swains,
Ah! silly maids, you laugh, but Andrew wins.
And what for you but sorrow and remorse,
Or box of salve to plaister disappointment?
Unless the smart of folly may be sooth'd
By Andrew's merry pranks, the dancing girl,
And frolic tumbler. Now the street is fill'd
With stalls and booths for gingerbread and beer,
Rear'd by enchantment, finish'd in a trice.
Amusements here for children of all sorts;

For

For little master's pence, a coach, a drum,
 A horse, a wife, a trumpet ; dolls for mis,.
 Fans, cups and saucers, kettles, maids and churns,
 For idle school-boys Punchinello rants,
 The juggler shuffles, and the artful dame
 Extends her lucky bag. For infants tall,
 Of twenty years and upwards, rueful games,
 To whirl the horse-shoe, bowl at the nine-pins,
 Game at the dial-plate, drink beer and gin,
 Rant, rave, and swear, cudgel, get drunk and fight,
 Then comes the ass-race. Let not wisdom frown
 If the grave clerk look on, and now and then
 Bestow a smile ; for we may see, Alcanor,
 In this untoward race the ways of life.
 Are we not asses all ? we start and run,
 And eagerly we press to pass the goal,
 And all to win a bauble, a lac'd hat.
 Was not great Wolfey such ? He ran the race
 And won the hat. What ranting politician,
 What prating lawyer, what ambitious clerk,
 But is an ass that gallops for a hat ?
 For what do Princes strive, but gilded hats ?
 For diadems ; whose bare and scanty brims
 Will hardly keep the sun-beam from their eyes
 For what do Poets strive ? a leafy hat,
 Without a crown or brim, which hardly screens
 The empty noddle from the fist of scorn,
 Much less repels the critic's thund'ring arm.
 And here and there intoxication too

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Concludes the race. Who wins the hat, gets drunk.
Who wins a laurel, mitre, cap or crown,
Is drunk as he. So Alexander fell,
So Haman, Cæsar, Spenser, Wolfey, James.

Now chilly ev'ning puts her grey coat on,
And from the east advancing, puts to flight
The rear of day, girt with a zone of stars.
The busy fair is ended. The rank booth
Spews out its beastly habitant, the mob
Disperse, and Andrew's merry pranks are done.
Home reels the drunken clown, or stays to fight,
Nothing the cause, yet honour much concern'd.
Confusion reigns, uproar and loud mis-rule ;
Distinctions cease, and still the oath, the scream,
The shout, the hoot, disturb the midnight ear
Of sober Chloe gone to bed betimes.

Such was the time, ah me ! when Dorothy,
The hubbub hardly ended, from her swain
The vow extorted to be ever her's.
Three times Alcanor's voice the banns proclaim'd,
And three times all were still. Then to the church
The grinning bride was led, and fast was tied,
Ah ! much too fast, the hymeneal knot.
Then grief was mine, grief inconsolable,
And sleepless nights and inharmonious days.
For how could I rejoice, my charmer gone,
My Lesbica fled, my lovely Lalage,
My Sugareffa, my dear Dorothy ?

AH

AH me! the golden year is done. Behold,
 Gloomy and sad November comes, with brow
 Severe and clouded. Scarce a leaf sustains
 His pestilential blast. The woods are stript,
 And all their honours shatter'd in the vale.
 The messenger of furlly Winter he,
 And in his hand he bears the nipping frost.
 Before his tyrant lord he scatters fleet,
 And with a hideous frown bids Autumn speed,
 And after her runs howling thro' the land.

The field has lost its verdure. All the pride
 Of the sweet garden fades. Where now the rose,
 The pink, the stock, the lupin, or the pea,
 Or gay chrysanthemum? Where now the comb,
 The after larkspur, balsam, or carnation?
 Or where the lilly with her snowy bells?
 Where the gay jafmin, odorous fyingra,
 Graceful laburnum, or bloom-clad arbut? So
 Or if we stray, where now the Summer's walk

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So still and peaceable, at early eve
Along the shady lane, or thro' the wood,
To pluck the ruddy strawberry, or smell
The perfum'd breeze that all the fragrance stole
Of honey-suckle, blossom'd beans, or clover?
Where now the blush of Spring, and the long day
Beloiter'd? chearful May that fill'd the woods
With music, scatter'd the green vale with flow'rs,
And hung a simile of universal joy
Upon the cheek of nature? Where blooms now
The king-cup and the daisy? Where inclines
The harebell or the cowslip? Where looks gay
The vernal furze with golden baskets hung?
Where captivates the sky-blue periwinkle
Under the cottage eaves? Where waves the wood,
Or rings with harmony the merry vale?
Day's harbinger no song attunes; no song
Or solo anthem deigns sweet Philomel.
The golden wood-pecker laughs loud no more.
The pye no longer prates; no longer scolds
The faucy jay. Who sees the goldfinch now
The feather'd groundfil pluck, or hears him sing
In bow'r of apple blossoms perch'd? Who sees
The chimney-haunting swallow skim the pool,
And quaintly dip, or hears his early song
Twitter'd to young-eyed day. All, all are hush'd.
The very bee her merry toil foregoes,
Nor seeks her nectar, to be sought in vain.
Only the solitary robin sings,

And

And perch'd aloft with melancholy note
 Chants out the dirge of Autumn ; cheerless bird,
 That loves the brown and desolated scene,
 And scanty fare of Winter. Let me weep
 With you, ye Muses, and with you, ye fair,
 Chief mourner at the grave of her we love,
 Expiring nature. For ye fought with me
 The sober twilight of the shelving wood,
 With me forsook the glare of sultry day,
 To tread the serious gloom Religion loves,
 And where she smiles and wipes her dewy eye,
 With meditation walking hand in hand.
 Ye too have lov'd and heartily approv'd
 The winding foot-path, and the sudden turn,
 The green-sward waggon-way and gothic aisle ;
 And heard me comment on the leaf, the branch,
 The arm, the girth of the paternal oak.
 Ye too, have lov'd the long-accustom'd gap,
 That all so unexpectedly presents
 The clear cerulean prospect down the vale.
 Oft have ye stood upon the shaggy brow
 Of yonder wood-clad hill, to gaze with me
 Athwart the wide and far extended view,
 That ocean skirts or blue downs indistinct.
 Oft have ye look'd with transport pure as mine
 Into the flow'ry dell. But ah ! no more
 We wander heedless ; Winter's wind forbids.
 The piercing cold commands us shut the door,
 And rouse the cheerful hearth ; for at the heels

Of

Of dark November, comes with arrowy scourge
The tyrannous December. Joyless now
The morning sun scarce seen, and clouded eve,
No genial influence sheds noon, eclips'd.
Sad scenes ensue; brief days, and blust'ring nights,
And snows, such as the winter loving Muse
Of Cowper paints well pleas'd, and such as mine
Views not unsatisfied. For tho' without
Bleak winds and pinching frosts, within is joy,
And harmony, and peace.

Say, Muse, how pass
The frozen hours of Winter, the long eve,
The gloomy morn, the cold and cheerless day,
At the lone mansion that invests the fair
And Village Curate. Genius there unfolds
Her quick impassion'd page; and Nature there,
And art their secret treasures all display.
There dance the jocund maids of Memory
In everlasting round. Heroic song
Her swelling act proclaims, and eloquence
Flows with her smooth and even tide along.
Transported History the fame recounts,
Of ages past and gone, and nothing vex'd
Or wearied with her long exact account,
O'erleaps the boundaries of present time,
And led by prophecy, extends her tale,
Fondly perhaps, to the world's consummation.
Then music cheers, and sympathetic sounds
Make

Make smooth the way for serious Tragedy.
 Then dialogue and high dispute, the song,
 The dance, the hearty laugh, and flippant wit
 Of merry Comedy. Urania then
 Points to the starry firmament or Moon
 Eclips'd, and holds attention mute, the while
 With moving finger she describes the course
 Of planetary stars, or with sweet voice
 Tells whither she led up her heav'nly bard
 To visit light and draw empyreal air ;
 Or whither Newton, more than mortal then,
 When musing as he sat, she shook the tree,
 And dropt an apple, and her studious child
 Caught up to heav'n. 'Tis pleasant to remark
 How early genius plumes her for the flight
 And tries her short excursions, fearful yet
 And little on her wing confiding, now
 Full-fledg'd and dauntless, cutting thro' the clouds
 And peering in the eye of heav'n itself.
 Sagacious Newton, let me muse with thee,
 And wonder at thy quick and piercing eye
 Cleans'd of its mortal film. Who does not wish
 Like thee to penetrate the dark abode
 Of clouded mystery, and in his word
 And works unfold the awful Deity.

But not at Newton only to admire,
 Ye studious fair, we love, but sometimes laugh
 At Brahe and Descartes ; praise the strong eye

Of

Of Galileo, and applaud the speed
Of busy Wilkins, posting like a witch
Upon a restive broom-stick to the Moon.

And sometimes thee, ingenious Boyle, we hear,
Maintaining truth and sifting nature ; thee
Sometimes, whose patriotic genius foil'd
Assailant Rome, and almost sav'd the state
Of falling Syracuse : then travel round
The universal globe, at ev'ry shore
Taking large draughts of story and of song.
But chiefly thee we love, majestic Britain,
Wedded to Neptune, and thy thund'ring fleets
Follow exulting to the hostile shore ;
Now bear thee company to farthest Ind,
Or to the frozen pole, or round the cape
Of utmost Horn, with philosophic touch
Converting dross to gold : now disembark,
And march with Harry to the heart of France,
And beard the wordy Monarch on his throne.
And now we follow to the cannon's mouth,
Tremendous Marlborough ; or stand by, and see
The living Elliot scare his foe to death
With everlasting shower of burning hail.
And many more we praise, and some accuse
Whose names and deeds my speedy muse sings not.

And now morality we love, and truth,
And serious argument, and grave debate ;

What

What Mede or Newton with prophetic eye
 Divine, what Hales or Tillotson advise.
 And we smile with zealous Latimer,
 Or silent Addifon, then range at large
 Cervantes, Sidney, Bacon, Fenelon,
 And twenty thousand more choice wits and rare.

But chiefly thee, immortal Shakespear, thee
 We love and honour, Nature's darling child,
 And still we court thy Muse and still applaud,
 Whether the gentle Portia tread the stage
 With bloody Shylock, or Vincentio wed
 The virtuous Isabel. Whether thy fays
 Dance to the Moon, or Prospero dispatch
 His sight-outrunning Ariel to the deep,
 The while the generous Miranda cheers
 Her fainting Ferdinand. Whether the Duke
 And gloomy Jaques confer, and Rosalind
 Laughs at her sighing lover in disguise ;
 Or smiling Perdita comes tripping by
 With mint and marj'ram, rosemary and rue,
 Or Viola that never told her love,
 But let concealment like a worm i' th' bud
 Feed on her damask cheek. With hearty laugh
 We still dismiss the still outwitted rogue,
 But still pretending Falstaff. Then we trace
 With terror and applause, the bloody deeds
 Of civil rage, and full of horror see
 Thy mailed Mars upon his altar sit

Up

Up to the ears in blood ; the fatal cause
Aspiring Bolingbroke. Thence wrath ensued,
And frequent bickering and stedfast hate.
The lie refounded and the gauntlet fell,
And ev'ry tongue cried traitor. To the field
They rush'd, and all their blades athirst drank
blood.

So Percy fell, and old Northumberland,
Three Dukes of Somerset three-fold renown'd,
Two Cliffords, virtuous Humphry, Suffolk, York.
So Montague and Warwick, two brave bears,
That in their chains fetter'd the kingly lion,
And made the forest tremble when they roar'd.
Then comes despotic Richard, in thy lines,
Great bard, supremely horrible, his eye
Still bent on slaughter, tho' his reeking blade
Has lost its edge by use, and his faint arm
Claims respite. Wolfey then the fall lament
Of earthly grandeur, and the favour lost
Of princely Harry, and we too lament.
Then pitied and applauded, Timon raves ;
And noble Coriolanus scorns the shout
Of popular applause, thence basely doom'd
To banishment and death. Then Brutus strikes,
And bleeding Julius, looking for his friend,
Dies by his hand. In hurly-burly then,
With ghosts and witches circled round, Macbeth
In fiery storm stalks by, with tim'rous eye
And fretful conscience, shunning the decree

Of

Of blood for blood. Then Imogen delights,
 And eagerly we trace th' eventful scene,
 Till all winds up into a happy close.
 Not such the fortune of afflicted Lear
 And poor Cordelia, of thy injur'd wife
 Jealous Othello, of the maid distraught
 Ophelia, or thy bride that slept with death,
 Too hasty Romeo. Yet these delight,
 And in their dread catastrophe dispense
 Wholesome correction to the bleeding heart.

The Poet silent, long with rapture heard,
 The Shakespear of another art succeeds.
 Sweet music wakes, and with transporting air
 Handel begins. What mortal is not rapt
 To hear his tender wildly-warbled song
 Where'er he strays; but chiefly when he sings
 Messiah come, and with amazing shout
 Proclaims him King of Kings, and Lord of Lords,
 For ever and for ever, Hallelujah.
 Great soul, O say from what immortal fount
 Thou hast deriv'd such never-failing power
 To win the soul, and bear it on the wings
 Of purest extacy, beyond the reach
 Of ev'ry human care. From whence thine art
 To lift us from the earth, and fix us there
 Where pure devotion with unsparing hand
 Pours on the altar of the living God
 The hallow'd incense of the grateful heart.

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O mighty Handel, what seraphic power
Gave inspiration to thy sacred song?
Thyself perchance was some supernal spirit,
Permitted to reside on earth awhile,
To teach us here what music is in Heaven.
If ev'ry Angel that attends the throne
Of clouded Deity, such song inspire,
Let but our mortal ears one chorus hear,
And all the world were gather'd into Heaven.
The very Devils surely were drawn up
To listen at the golden doors of light,
And Hell left wasteful, wide, and desolae.

Corelli, sweet harmonious bird, thee too
We hear delighted, and thy mellow strains
Deem no mean recompense for the lost song
Of lark and nightingale. Thy air repeat,
And let judicious discord still commend
Triumphant harmony, till Winter's self
Be won like us, and smooth his rugged brow,
And all his hours enchanted fleet away,
Soft as his fur, and quiet as his snow.

And oft we feel the soul-subduing power
Of vocal harmony, breath'd softly forth
With equable accord, without or art,
Or quaint embellishment, save only such
As Nature dictates, and without design
Lets fall with ease in her impassion'd mood.

Then

Then serious glee and elegy delight ;
 Or pious anthem such as Croft inspires,
 Or graver Purcel, or endearing Clark.
 The noble harmony of Brewer, Este,
 Webbe, Baildon, Ravenscroft, we hear
 With ever-new delight. Brisk canzonet
 Then pleases, gay duet, or Highland air
 Divinely warbled, and with cadence sweet
 And tender pause drawn out by one we love,
 Spontaneous and unask'd. And oft the soul
 With patriotic ardour glows, and pants
 For glory, honour, and immortal deeds,
 Transported at the sound of martial strains
 With sudden burst commenc'd, and moving flow
 With solemn grandeur and majestic pomp
 To an obstreperous rebounding close.

But who shall tell in simple song like mine,
 The many shapes that music, Proteus-like,
 Puts on, with grateful change of subject, time,
 Contrivance, mood, soothing the captive ear,
 And filling the rapt soul with fare so sweet
 That stills she feeds and hungers. Human tongue
 Shall hardly tell what infinite delight
 Sweet Music yields, for ever fashioning
 Her sober pleasures to the various mind.
 What wonder then the sulky wheels of time
 Fly glibly round, the drowsy pendulum
 Foregoes his old vexatious click unheeded,

And

And the shrill-sounding bell rings out apace
 The brief accomplish'd hours. By Music won,
 Decrepit Time forgets his annual gout,
 Renews his dance, and with a noiseless foot
 Hies speedily away.

I have not told,
 How oft we listen to the musty song
 Of ancient bards, nor think we need excuse
 To honour merit in her home-spun suit.
 And chiefly we esteem thy fairy song,
 Immortal Spenser, in rude guise yclad.
 Then the fierce knight comes pricking o'er the
 plain,
 Drad for his derring do and bloody deed.
 And now the combat 'gins, and cruel arms
 The recreant knight o'erwhelm in uncouth fray.
 The castle falls, and many a maid is won,
 And many a maid is lost thro' dire mishap.

Then comes a troop in gilded uniform,
 The goodly band Johnsonian. Cowley first,
 Poetic child, whose philosophic muse
 Distracts, delights, torments, and captivates.
 Let me attend, when from the world retir'd,
 He turn'd his restive Pegasus to graze,
 And thought, and wrote, sedate and sober prose.
 Comes Milton next, that like his wakeful bird
 Sings darkling, sings and mourns his eye-sight lost.

E

And

And nightly wanders to the muses' haunt,
 Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
 Smit with the love of sacred song ; to us
 Displaying nature, and the blissful scenes
 Of Paradise, tho' not to him returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.
 Sweet bard, that bears us softly now, and smooth
 As that unwrinkled flood that slowly winds
 By Windsor's haughty tow'rs, and visits shores
 Divinely various—rushes now, and leaps,
 Astounding sense, immeasurable depth,
 A foaming cataract, whose thund'ring fall
 Confounds all hell, and utmost earth and heaven.
 Comes Butler then, incomparable wit,
 And not to be reprov'd, save when his muse
 Decorum overleaps, and here and there
 Bolts the coarse jest, to the chaste eye and ear
 Offensive : for behind the comic mask
 We find the scholar and the man of sense,
 'The friend of virtue, and the foe of vice.
 'Then follows courtly Waller, and in vain
 On Amoret or Saccharissa calls,
 With budget full of trifles, birth-day odes,
 Congratulations, songs, and compliments,
 And mythologic tales. Then Denham charms,
 And from his own Parnassus, Cooper's hill,
 Sings the wide prospect that extended lies

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Under his proud survey. Then Sprat. And then
Roscommon fills with elegant remark,
His verse as elegant ; unspotted lines
Flow from a mind unspotted as themselves.
Then Wilmot tunes his reed, and in his song
Gives early promise of a genius, rare
And turn'd for excellence. But ah ! how vain
All human hopes ! The prime of life is spent,
His talent wasted, and the giddy fool
Grows old in pleasure, and denies his God.
The grave in view, an honest friend his guide,
He views his conduct with remorse, repents,
Acknowledges his fault, curses the wit
Of feeble man that so outwits itself,
And dies a martyr to the pains of vice.
Then Yalden sings, and fills us with delight,
His harp so tun'd, that as the morning breaks
It moves spontaneous rapture, and again
At ev'ning close with solemn eulogy
Welcomes the reign of night. With weeping eye
But harlot cheek, then Otway's muse appears
And charms the hearer with her Syren song,
To decency, alas, no friend, to vice
No enemy. His Celia then proclaims
Enamour'd Duke, at Floriana's grave
Strewing sweet flow'rs and sweeter verse. Then
sings

The gen'rous Dorset, sings and sings too much,
Scarce heard an hour. Chaste Montague succeeds,

Stepney less pure, and Walsh, with feeble wing,
 Half flying, half on foot. Then comes a bard,
 Worn out and penniless, and poet still
 Tho' bent with years, and in impetuous rhyme
 Pours out his unexhausted song. What muse
 So flexible, so generous as thine,
 Immortal Dryden ! From her copious fount
 Large draughts he took, and unbeseeming song
 Inebriated sang. Who does not grieve,
 To hear the foul and insolent rebuke
 Of angry satire from a bard so rare ?
 To trace the lubricous and oily course
 Of abject adulation, the lewd line
 Of shameless vice, from page to page ? and find
 The judgment brib'd, the heart unprincipled,
 And only loyal at th' expence of truth,
 Of justice, and of virtue ? Meaner strain
 The dapper wit commends of sprightly Garth.
 We smile to see fantastic poetry
 Shake hands with physic, and with grave bur-
 lesque

Arrange his gallipots, and gild his pills ;
 Then march in dreadful armour to the field,
 To screen her new ally from hostile shocks,
 With pestle truncheon, Cloacinian helm,
 And levell'd squirt. Then heartily we laugh,
 With laughter-loving King, and much applaud
 That vein of mirth which, innocent and clear,
 In silver decency flows. Young Phillips then,

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And to the eloquent orchestra tunes
His virtuous, unmeaning song. And now
In tones that might attract an angel's ear,
Flows the smooth strain of righteous Addison.
Then Blackmore sings an everlasting tale,
Blest with a callous muse. Genius in vain
Laughs at the proud attempt, for still he bawls,
And with gigantic dissonance subdues
The universal hiss. No poet sure,
But mark the man, and you shall find him good.
And what's the poet if the man be naught?
Let Buckingham reply. Genius and wit
May flourish for a day, and snatch the wreath

From awkward honesty. But soon shall fade
 The easy laurels of a vicious muse,
 While amaranthine honours crown the brow
 Of unpoetic virtue. Waller's muse
 In courteous Granville lives, and still we hear
 Of Jove and Juno, Mercury and Mars,
 And all the nauseous mythologic rout.
 May he that loves hereafter, never win
 The angel he adores, if in his song
 Be aught of pagan ornament display'd.
 May he be curs'd like you, unlucky bards,
 Be Saccharissa's dupe, and Myra's scorn.
 Who can refuse applause to tragic Rowe?
 Who can withhold his honest praise from thee,
 Tickel, thou friend of Addison, and virtue?
 Who is not startled at the fertile wit
 Of beardless Congreve? and who does not grieve
 It was not drawn in the defence of virtue?
 How sweet the music of thy happy lines,
 Poetic Prior; full of mirth thy muse,
 And exquisite her jest. Ah! hear it not,
 Ye sober fair, for fulsome is the tale,
 And only fit for the distemper'd ear
 Of jolly libertines. His graver song
 Applaud unsatisfied, and ever laugh
 To see him mount the furious Pegasus
 Pindaric, often tried, but tried in vain,
 And never to be tam'd by crazy wits.
 'Twas an unruly and a hard-mouth'd horse,
And

‘ And flung his rider if he sat not sure,’
Dan Cowley said. Yet up sprung Mat, resolv’d.
§ O’er sea and land with an unbounded loose,
Runs the mad steed, a Gilpin race I ween.
Hardly the Muse can fit the head-strong horse.
See, now she gallops round the Belgic shore,
Now thro’ the raging ocean ploughs her way,
To rough Ierne’s camps ; there sounds alarms,
In the dank marshes finds her glorious theme,
And plunges after him thro’ Boyne’s fierce flood.
Back to his Albion then, then with stiff wing
East, over Danube and Propontis’ shores,
From the Mœotis to the northern sea,
To visit the young Muscovite ; thence up,
Resolv’d to reach the high empyrean sphere,
And ask for William an Olympic crown.
Till lost in trackless fields of shining day,
Unhors’d, and all aghast, down, down she comes
Comes rushing with uncommon ruin down.
Glorious attempt, but not unhappy fate.
’Twas lucky, Mat, thou had’st not giv’n a name
To some Icarian gulf, or shook at least
The carnal man so sore, that he had limp’d,
And lamely hobbled to the verge of life.
But, thank our stars, thy pace is even yet,

§ See his *Carmen Seculare* for the year 1700.

And

And happily the muse her mirthful song
 In durance vile prolongs. So have I heard
 The captive finch, in narrow cage confin'd,
 Charm all his woe away with cheerful song,
 Which might have melted e'en a heart of steel
 To give him liberty. Hence, hence, away
 Ye meaner wits, hide your diminish'd heads,
 See genius self approaches. Homer's soul
 A puny child informs. Let envy laugh
 To see an urchin ugly as herself
 The glory of our isle. For thee, great bard,
 We twine the laurel wreath, and grant it thine
 Thrice-won. Shall any mortal tongue presume
 To scatter censure on thy charming page?
 Hark, 'tis the din of twenty thousand curs
 Who bark at excellence. Who best deserves
 Must feel the scourge of infinite abuse,
 For man to man is fiercer than the wolf,
 More cruel than the tiger. Who can brook
 The sight of aught more worthy than himself?
 Invite an angel from the courts of heaven,
 Our critic eye shall spy a thousand faults
 Where not a fault exists. Mistake me not,
 I call not thee an angel, haughty bard,
 Thy deeds were human. With an honest heart
 I love the poet, but detest the man.
 Thy purer lays what mortal can despise,
 Thy baser song what mortal can approve,
 Thou witty, dirty, patriotic Dean?

Laugh

Laugh on, laugh on. With pencil exquisite
Describe the features of adopted vice,
And overbearing folly. Give the fair,
The peerless Stella, everlasting worth,
Deride thy narrow paper-sparing friend,
And gall the great. But why shall thy sweet
Muse

Turn scavenger, and the foul kennel rake
For themes and similes? What heart but grieves,
To find an equal portion in thy song
Of elegantly fair and grossly foul?
Now honest Gay, a city shepherd, sings,
Nor sings in vain to us. In Arcady
We love to stray, and dream of happy days
No eye has seen, no heart has felt. We love
The land of Fairy, and the puny deeds
Of dapper elves. Whate'er the frantic poet
In his wild mood imagines, we applaud.
Nor wholly scorn with Gay or Broome, to stray,
Or Ambrose Philips, thro enchanted land
To painted meadows, flow'ry lawns and hills,
To crystal floods, cool groves, and shady bow'rs,
And rills that babble, tinkle, purl, and murmur.
How sweet the song that from thy mellow pipe,
Dear Parnel, flow'd. Death heard and was amaz'd.
And his stone couch forsook, all wonder now
And now all envy. Sure he thought no bard
Of mortal mixture could such tones create.

Or

Or if of mortal mixture, he had liv'd
 More than the days of man, and stol'n from years
 Due to the reign of silence and of death,
 Song so divine. With the bad thought possess'd,
 He whet his arrow on a flint, advanc'd,
 And flung it greedily, his lipless jaws
 Grinding with hate. So fell betimes the bard,
 So triumph'd Death, and at the bloody deed
 Shook his lean bones with laughter. Cursed
 fiend,

'Thou bane of excellence, go hence, and laugh;
 Yet shall the pious poet sing again,
 And thou shalt hear, and with eternal wrath
 Ay burning, dance with agony, and gnaw,
 Howling for pain, the adamantine gates
 Of treble-bolted Hell.

Away, kind bards;
 Enough of you, nor shall your song beguile
 One moment more; for see again sweet Spring
 Laughs at our window, and with rosy hand
 Shews the full blossom and the budded leaf.
 Away, away. Some wint'ry day be thine,
 Descriptive Thomson; some December night,
 Thine, pious Young; some melancholy morn
 In wat'ry fog wrapt up, thine, orphan Savage.
 Be thou our close companion, Shenstone, thou,
 Sweet bard of Hagley, in the hawthorn shade

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Some weary Summer's noon. Be thou our guest,
Impetuous Akenfide, some gloomy eve,
When the red lightning scarce begins to glare,
And the mute thunder hardly deigns to growl.
Rais'd by thy torrent song, we shall enjoy
The loud increasing horrors of the storm,
Awfully grand. At such a time thee too,
Rapt in ferocious extacy, we call,
Terrific Gray, to sweep thy fullen lyre,
And give to madness the distracted soul.
Repose at leisure, ye inferior bards,
Till Summer's beauty flies, and the green wood
Scatters her recent honours to the breeze.

So have I gayly sung the man how blest,
The Village Curate; weaving in my song
Your praise, ye fair, and many an honest thought
Which unsolicited demanded room.
I care not if no eye this page peruse.
I sung with pleasure, and I end with joy.
I sing no more, and blame him not who sleeps,
Careless what I, enamour'd of the vale
And hilly woodland, have so vainly sung.
For popular applause, I ask it not.
Who'd be a feather in the billowy breeze?
True, noble critic, it were ill deserv'd,
By this rude song obtain'd. Yet I not fear,
Ere the short tale of my existence close,

Some

Some strain, by chance, on my time-mellow'd harp
To hit, these woods may well remember. Yes,
Some happy strain, by chance, I hope to hit,
If yet the Muses love thy fam'd retreat,
O Sidney, or thy Spenser's early song;
If yet the walks where love-sick Waller mus'd,
If yet immortal Saccharissa's haunt
Delight them, and sweet Amoret's abode.



F I N I S.

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